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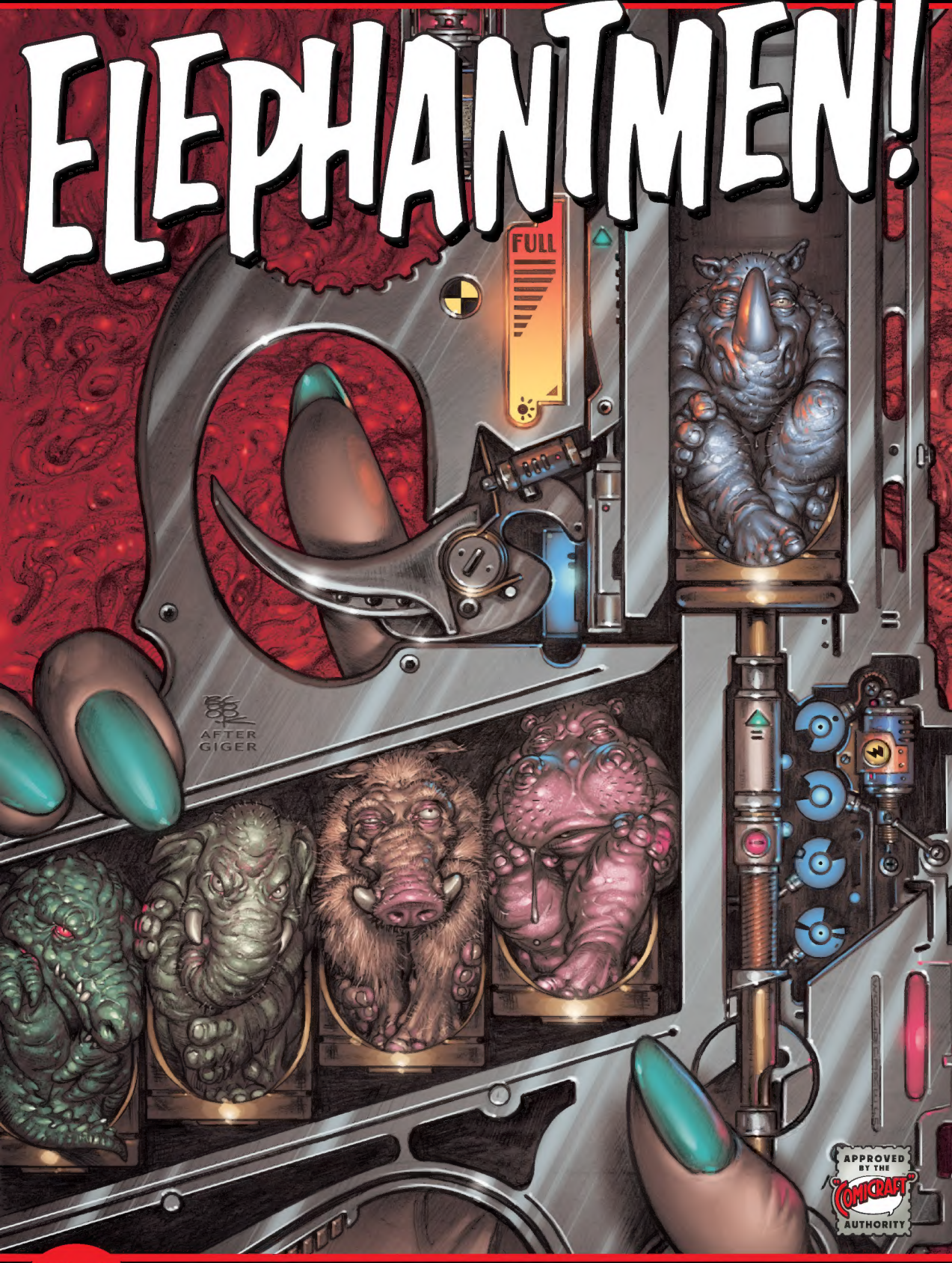
ELEPHANTMEN!



2260 BOOK TWO

"THE RED QUEEN"

STARKINGS · MEDELLIN · COOK · LINSNER · ROSHELL

Image Comics presents:

ELEPHANTMEN

By RICHARD STARKINGS *story & lettering* AXEL MEDELLIN *art* • BOO COOK *cover art*

77813

THE RED QUEEN

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger
JOHN 'JG' ROSHELL
Secret Weapon
JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER
Back Cover Art

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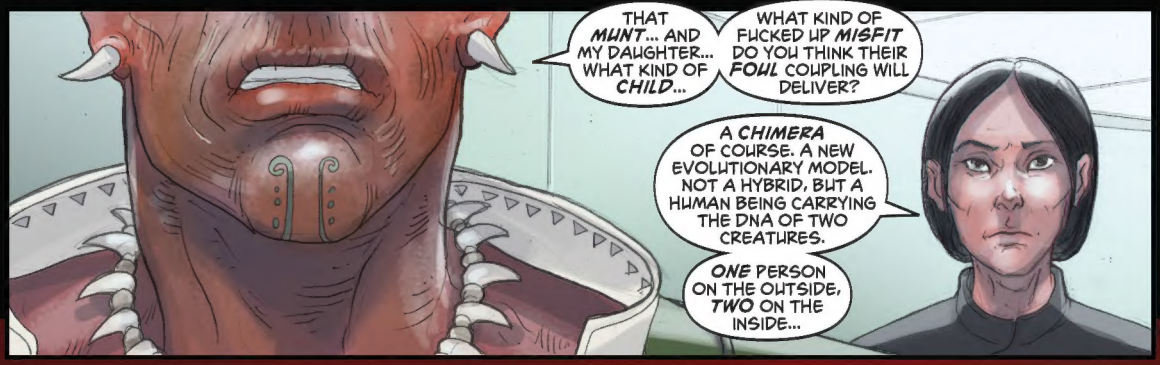
WHO IS IN CHARGE HERE?

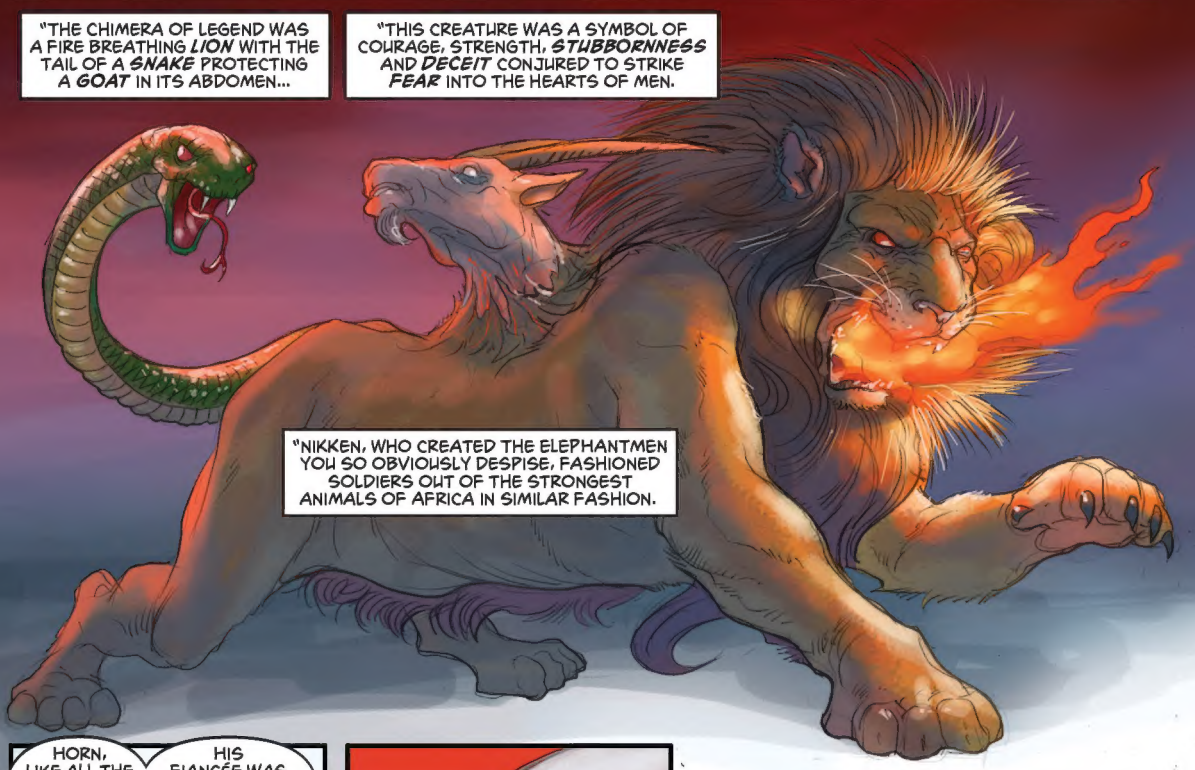
HARVEST

El·e·phant·men [el-*uh*-*fuh*nt-men]
noun:
1. Transgenics; human/animal hybrids, genetically engineered by the **MAPPO Corporation** for military deployment in the **Afro-Sino War** (2239-2243). Rehabilitated by the **United Nations**, these creatures were gradually inculcated into human society.
2. Derogatory term for such.

BRING HIM TO ME.
TELL HIM *SERENGHETI* IS HERE TO SPEAK WITH HIM.

I WILL NOT BE *PATIENT*. I HAVE *QUESTIONS* TO ASK.
MISTER SERENGHETI. *I* AM IN CHARGE.
HIAICHI SAKAMOTO, AT YOUR SERVICE.
OF COURSE. ANOTHER *JAP*.
WHAT *IS* IT WITH YOUR PEOPLE?
WHAT KIND OF UNNATURAL BUSINESS DO YOU *CONDUCT* HERE?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHERE THIS *PERVERSE* FASCINATION TOOK *KAZUSHI NIKKEN?*
BUT TELL ME.
WHY DID MY *DAUGHTER*... WHY DID *SAHARA*, COME TO THIS PLACE?
WAS HER *MUNT* INCAPABLE OF IMPREGNATING HER *HIMSELF?*
INTERESTING. YOU CHOOSE NOT TO REFER TO *OBADIAH HORN* BY HIS *NAME*.


THAT MUNT... AND MY DAUGHTER... WHAT KIND OF CHILD...
WHAT KIND OF FUCKED UP MISFIT DO YOU THINK THEIR FOUL COUPLING WILL DELIVER?
A CHIMERA OF COURSE. A NEW EVOLUTIONARY MODEL. NOT A HYBRID, BUT A HUMAN BEING CARRYING THE DNA OF TWO CREATURES.
ONE PERSON ON THE OUTSIDE, TWO ON THE INSIDE...


"THE CHIMERA OF LEGEND WAS A FIRE BREATHING LION WITH THE TAIL OF A SNAKE PROTECTING A GOAT IN ITS ABDOMEN...
"THIS CREATURE WAS A SYMBOL OF COURAGE, STRENGTH, STUBBORNNESS AND DECEIT CONJURED TO STRIKE FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF MEN.
"NIKKEN, WHO CREATED THE ELEPHANTMEN YOU SO OBVIOUSLY DESPISE, FASHIONED SOLDIERS OUT OF THE STRONGEST ANIMALS OF AFRICA IN SIMILAR FASHION.

HORN, LIKE ALL THE TRANSGENICS, IS VIRILE BUT GENETICALLY INFERTILE.
HIS FIANCÉE WAS IMPREGNATED USING CELLULAR DNA.
HOWEVER, I CAN PUT YOUR MIND AT REST... HER PREGNANCY HAS BEEN TERMINATED.
ONLY THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, IS IT?
MY INFORMANTS TELL ME THAT TWO WOMEN WERE CONTAMINATED WITH THAT MUNT'S DNA.
SAHARA... AND HER BODY DOUBLE.
SO, TELL ME... AFTER YOU TERMINATED THE DOPPELGÄNGER'S PREGNANCY...

WHERE DID YOU HIDE SAHARA AND HER UNBORN CHILD?

I KNOW OF THE CHIMERA -- IT IS AN OMEN OF STORMS, EARTHQUAKES AND DISASTER.
IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.
SO, AGAIN, WHERE IS SAHARA?
I-I CAN ASSURE YOU... NEITHER HORN NOR PROMETHEAN KNOW OF THE SUBSTITUTION.
SAHARA INSISTED THAT HER LOCATION WAS NOT EVEN A SECRET TO BE KEPT.
IS IT NOT TRUE THAT YOU SOLD YOUR OWN WIFE TO MAPPO, AND SHE WAS MADE TO BIRTH ONE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN, AGAINST HER WILL?
FITTING THEN, THAT SAHARA HAS SUBSEQUENTLY CHOSEN -- FREELY -- TO BEAR THE CHILD OF A TRANSGENIC.
THE CIRCLE IS MADE COMPLETE.
SHE HAS THE RIGHT TO BEAR HORN'S CHILD. THE ELEPHANTMEN MUST HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO IMMORTALITY AS WE DO.
NO.
THEY HAVE NO RIGHTS.
SCH
MPF
DISPOSE OF ALL THESE WITNESSES.
RAKATA RAKATA RAKATA
SAHARA'S FATE IS ALREADY SEALED. IF SHE AND HER BASTARD CHILD DON'T DIE IN CHILDBIRTH, IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE TO KILL THEM BOTH.
H
A

THE RED QUEEN

DESERT BREEZES

RAWF!

"Every creature on earth is in a Red Queen chess tournament with its parasites (or hosts), its predators (or prey), and, above all, with its mate."

MATT RIDLEY

Richard Starkings Story

Axel Medellin Art

PART ONE

CHIMERA

GRANGER...?

PLEASE... JUST TAKE WHAT YOU WANT...

WHOA, WHOA, *WHOA!* WHAT THE HECK--?!

IS THAT A TIRE IRON?! THAT IS SO NOT COOL!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BROTHER?
APPLYING A LITTLE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.
YOU KNOW-- KICKING THIS MUNT'S ASS.
LOOK, THIS CITY IS -- IT'S JUST MESSED UP, MAN. OUR PARENTS HAD TO CLOSE THEIR STORE DOWN THE STREET--
THIS MONKEY GETS WORK HANDED TO HIM ON A PLATE.
HOW IS THAT COOL?
HEY, I FEEL FOR YOU, MY FRIEND, I REALLY DO....
BUT, DUDE. JEREMIAH HERE WORKS AS HARD AS ANY IMMIGRANT, AND HIS LIFE IS SERIOUSLY NO BED OF ROSES...
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE FIRST PUNKS HE'S HAD TO DEAL WITH?
YOU WON'T BE THE LAST EITHER... C'MON, JERRY.
MY MOM AND DAD AREN'T IMMIGRANTS...

YOU WANT ME TO TEACH THEM A LESSON, MIKE?
HEY!
RAWF!
NO, NO, NO! ONE PUNCH FROM YOU AND THESE GUYS AREN'T IN EMERGENCY--
THEY'RE DEAD FROM SEVERE HEAD TRAUMA...
WE DO NOT WANT THAT, DO WE? PEACE.
MIKE HAS A POINT. HE'S A SWEET GUY, AIN'T HE?
WE WOULDN'T WANNA UPSET HIM.
IT'S OKAY, HIP. A STORY, A STORY, LET IT COME, LET IT GO...
LET'S BE GETTING ON...
WE ALL GOT A LITTLE BIT OF PEACE INSIDE, RIGHT, PUMPKIN?
IT'S JUST BURIED A LITTLE DEEPER IN SOME PEOPLE'S HEARTS, RIGHT?
YA GOTTA SCOOP IT OUT LIKE ICE CREAM SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY IT!
WE HAVETA MAKE SOME GOOD CAUSES, BREAK THE CYCLE, RIGHT, JERRY?
IT COMES AROUND, IT GOES AROUND.

ME, I'M JUST HERE TO HELP...
WHAT SAY WE HAVE OURSELVES A LITTLE GROUP HUG?
I'M KIDDING! JUST A HANDSHAKE WILL DO ME.
THERE YA GO!
I THINK I KNOW YOUR PARENTS... I'M SO SORRY TIMES HAVE GOTTEN HARD FOR THEM.
PLEASE SEND THEM MY REGARDS.
UH... YEAH. I'LL, UH, I'LL DO THAT.
LOOK AT THAT! WORLD PEACE ON MY DOORSTEP!
IT CAN HAPPEN!
YOU GUYS HAVE AN EASY NIGHT. SEE YOU IN THE MORNING, JERRY!
MAN, WHATEVER HE'S SMOKIN', I WANT SOME.
MIKE'S A GOOD GUY. HE HAS HIS PROBLEMS BUT DOESN'T GET SO CAUGHT UP HE CAN'T HELP OUT SOMEONE ELSE.
AND YOU, JEREMIAH?
WHO ARE YOU HELPING OUT?
AND WHY'D YOU CALL ME?
Y'KNOW, HIP...
VRMMMMMM

...I WAS JUST GONNA ASK JEREMIAH THE SAME THING!
TAMALES
TMX
BOBA HUT

WELCOME, WELCOME, MISTER HORN, SAHARA...
MAYOR HERNANDEZ, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU.
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
PLEASE, NO NEED FOR FORMALITIES, CALL ME OBADIAH.
YES, OF COURSE, OBADIAH. AND THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING, SAHARA...
I WASN'T SURE WE WOULD BE GRACED WITH YOUR GLAMOUR AND PRESENCE. PLEASE, THIS WAY...
CLAP CLAP CLAP
HOW READILY THEY HAVE ACCEPTED HER.
PANYA NEVER THOUGHT SHE COULD STEP INTO SAHARA'S SHOES SO SUCCESSFULLY.
NOR DID SHE REALIZE HOW MUCH SHE WOULD ENJOY IT.
SAHARA HAD EVERYTHING. BUT NOW, PANYA HAS EVERYTHING.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THIS GRAND OPENING OF THE IVORY TOWERS HOTEL AND CASINO, TONIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THERE IS A BETTER LOCATION IN L.A FOR REST AND RELAXATION, A SPOT OF GAMBLING AND FINE DINING... AND MAYBE EVEN YOUR DAUGHTER'S WEDDING!
SO, WITH NO FURTHER ADO, LET ME INTRODUCE THIS EVENING'S BENEFACTOR AND OWNER OF THIS NEW ESTABLISHMENT.. OBADIAH HORN!

THANK YOU, MAYOR... THANK YOU ALL.
I AM TRULY HONORED TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS EVENING.
I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED SUCH A WARM WELCOME WHEN I FIRST CAME TO LOS ANGELES.
IN CHAINS.
HATED AND FEARED.
ON OUR WAY TO... WHAT? TRIAL? EXECUTION?
NOT ONE OF US EXPECTED TO BE MET WITH COMPASSION. FORGIVENESS.
I STAND AMONGST YOU NOW AS EVIDENCE THAT A HUMANISTIC POLICY TOWARD THE OTHER CAN YIELD RESULTS.
I AM HERE WITH YOU NOW AS ONE OF YOUR OWN.
BUT I WOULD NOT BE HERE -- I COULD NOT BE HERE -- WITHOUT THE LOVE OF MY LIFE, SAHARA. AND, I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE, THE FIRST MARRIAGE HERE WILL BE OUR OWN.
SHE HAS EVEN FOOLED HORN HIMSELF.
AND WHERE IS SAHARA NOW?
GIVING BIRTH TO HER PRECIOUS CHILD IN SOME SQUALID SHANTY TOWN IN MEXICO OR ARIZONA...
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
BUT SOON HER LIFE WON'T MATTER.
BECAUSE PANYA IS SAHARA NOW.
AND SHE WILL BE HORN'S BRIDE.

CUT IT OUT!
SAHARA? WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE GOOD MUD...?
I'LL SAVE YOU YOUR QUESTIONS. YES, SHE IS PREGNANT.
YES, IT'S HORN'S CHILD.
YES, SHE'S READY TO DELIVER.
WELL, I'M GLAD WE GOT ALL THAT STRAIGHT...

NOW HOW ABOUT, "WHAT IS SHE DOING IN YOUR SHOP?"
AND THEN, "WHY ISN'T SHE IN A HOSPITAL?!"
HER WATERS HAVE BROKEN!
RONNIE, NO ONE CAN KNOW THAT SHE'S HERE.
NO ONE CAN KNOW THAT SHE HAS A CHILD.
I ASKED MIKI TO COME HERE TO DELIVER THE BABY.
WHAT?
I'M NOT DELIVERING THE BABY! YOU ARE!
ME?
I'M JUST A CAB DRIVER.
YOU WERE A MEDIC IN THE WAR. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THIS STUFF.
I ONLY TREATED TRANSGENICS... ELEPHANT MEN.
JEREMIAH, WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
WE CAN'T GO TO A HOSPITAL, OR HARVEST.
AND IT HAS TO BE A CAESARIAN OR IT WILL KILL HER.
Oh, MY...
IT'S COMING... PLEASE... CUT IT OUT!

MY... DAUGHTER, SAHARA, IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE, EITHER PREGNANT...
...OR ALREADY SUCKLING HER BASTARD CHILD.
"SOMEONE KNOWS WHERE SHE IS.
"SOMEONE IS HELPING HER.
"MAYBE HORN HIMSELF DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS, BUT ONE OF THOSE MUNTS SHE HAS INGRATIATED HERSELF WITH DOES.
"PERHAPS THEY THINK THAT THE BIRTH OF SOME UGLY HALFBREED IS IMPORTANT TO THEIR KIND. PERHAPS THERE ARE HIPPY LIBERALS OUT THERE THAT THINK THE SAME THING."
I SHOULD HAVE STRANGLED SAHARA BEFORE SHE TOOK HER FIRST BREATH.
I WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN.

FIND OUT WHO'S SHELTERING HER.
CALL IN *EVERY* INFORMANT YOU HAVE OUT THERE.
HAVE THEM ASK QUESTIONS. *MAKE SURE* THEY GET ANSWERS.
THE *JANITORS* AT IVORY TOWERS.
THE WOMEN WHO *FAWN* OVER HER AT *DESERT BREEZES*.
THE INTERPRETERS WHO WORK WITH HER AT THE U.N.
THEN BRING ANY INFORMATION TO ME.

"LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR; YOU WILL *NOT* KILL SAHARA.
"SHE IS MUCH LOVED. HER DEATH NOW WOULD WOULD ONLY MAKE HER SOME KIND OF *SAINT*.
"HER MURDER WOULD AWARD HER MUNT THE PUBLIC'S SYMPATHY.
"NO. FIRST I WILL *DESTROY* HER.
"*THEN* I WILL KILL HER.

SAHARA, CONGRATULATIONS. YOU HAVE A *NORMAL* HEALTHY BOY...
NORMAL?

IT--IT *IS* NORMAL.
THIS WILL BREAK OBADIAH'S HEART.

2
FULL
AFTER
GIGER

"Gene Research
will yet teach us fear."
H R GIGER

THE RED QUEEN

WE ARE ALL *RUNNING*.

WE ARE ALL TRYING TO ESCAPE OUR OWN *MONSTERS*.

PART TWO

ALIEN

HUMAN BEINGS ARE MERELY CONSTRUCTS OF BONES UNDT MEAT UNDT SKIN.
INSIDE THESE FLESHY MACHINES LURK BOTH PREY AND PREDATOR. PARASITE UNDT HOST.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.
DEEP WITHIN THE CELL STRUCTURE OF THIS ORGANISM THAT CRADLES OUR CONSCIOUSNESS, SACRED INFORMATION IS PRESERVED. SUPPRESSED.
THAT IS WHERE THE MONSTERS THAT TORTURE US CAN BE FOUND.
THE MECHANISM OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS IS HIDDEN FROM US.
WHEN A SURGEON CUTS INTO A BODY, HE KNOWS WHAT HE WILL FIND.
WHEN WE DELVE INTO THE COLD, MYSTERIOUS SPACES OF OUR OWN SOULS, WE CANNOT SAY THE SAME.
DOUBTS, FEARS UNDT NIGHTMARES; THESE ARE THE STRONG DRIVES THAT OPEN US UP TO THE UNKNOWN. THESE ARE OUR SCALPELS.
THERE ARE MORE BACTERIAL CELLS INSIDE OF US THAN THERE ARE HUMAN CELLS.
EACH OF THESE PARASITIC CREATURES IS HUNGRILY WAITING FOR ITS CHANCE TO THRIVE, TO CONSUME US.
THERE ARE ALSO MORE DEMONS UNDT DARK PASSAGES IN OUR MINDS THAN THERE ARE BACTERIA.
NO MATTER HOW WELL WE ADAPT TO OUR EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, WE MUST NEVER REST BECAUSE THESE SINISTER, YET NATURAL FORMS OF LIFE INSIDE OF US ARE ALSO STRUGGLING FOR THEIR EXISTENCE.
IT IS LIKE EIN ARMS RACE INSIDE OUR BODIES.

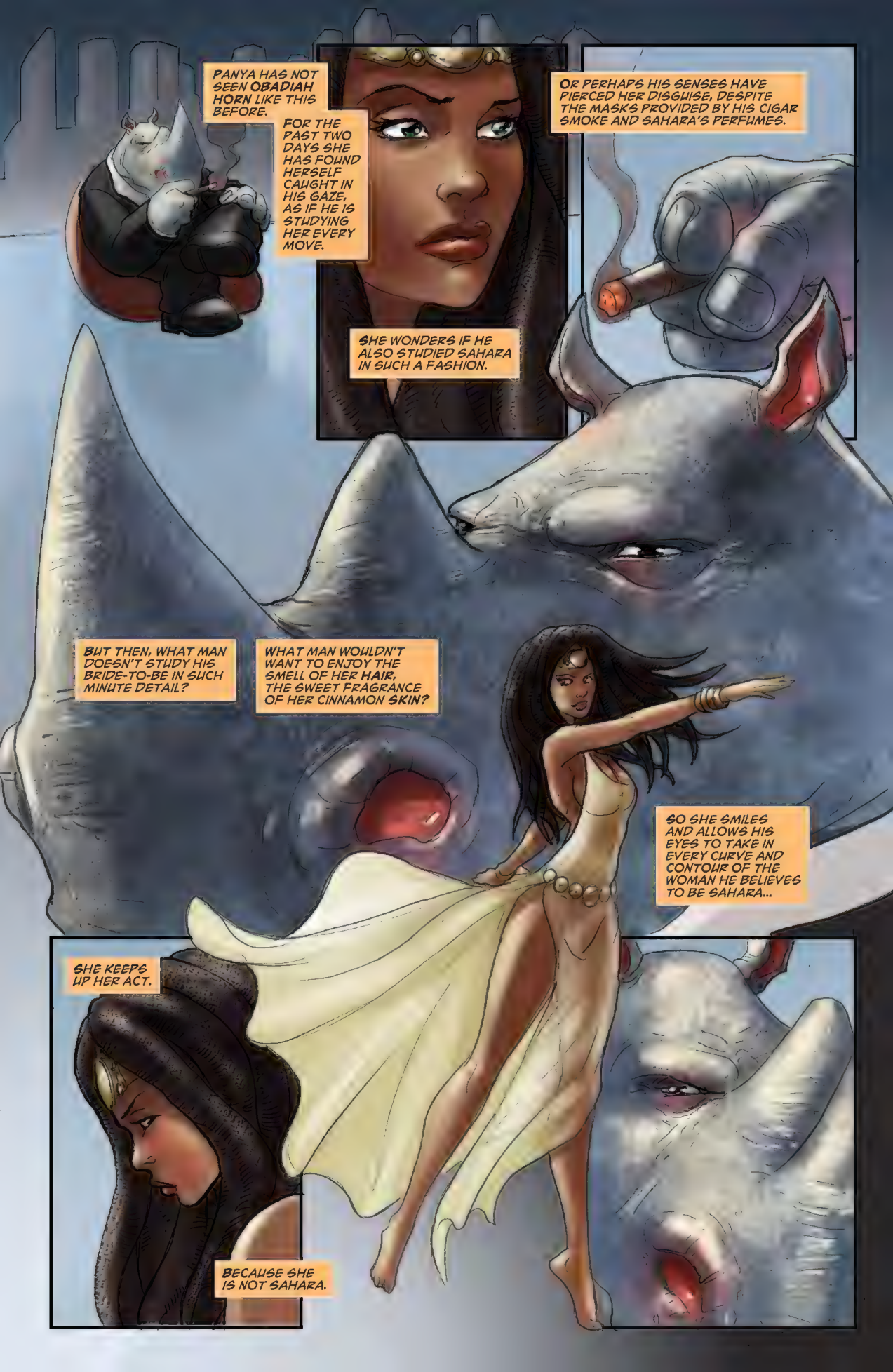
KRTUNCH
WHMP
KRTESH
WHERE IS SAHARA?!
WHERE IS MY DAUGHTER HIDING?
YEAH, OKAY YEAH, I... SEEN SOMETHIN'...
DUDE! PEACE -- UHRK OUT, MAN..

TO UNDERSTAND THESE BATTLES THAT ARE BEING FOUGHT INSIDE OUR PHYSICAL SELVES, WE EXPLORE THE GYNAECOLOGICAL PASSAGEWAYS OF THE WOMBS THAT DELIVERED US, LOOKING FOR THE SECRETS OF LIFE. LOOKING FOR THE PURPOSE.
UNDT WHAT IS FOUND? THAT THE BODY IS MERELY EIN EVOLUTIONARY VEHICLE FOR THE GENE.
THAT WE ARE MERELY ORGANISMS DRIVEN TO SEEK OUT THE BEST GENES FOR THE CONTINUATION OF OUR SPECIES.
THE MALE COMPETES WITH OTHER MALES FOR THE BEST FEMALE, FOR THE BEST VESSEL FOR HIS GENES.
UNDT THE FEMALE SELECTS THE BEST MALE FOR HERS.

MAN UNDT ANIMALS ARE ALIKE IN THIS REGARD... THEY SERVE ONLY THE SELFISH INTERESTS OF THEIR GENES.
SEX IS THE CLUMSY ACT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN RIVAL GENES.
WE CHOOSE TO SUFFUSE THIS VULGAR, SWEATY INDULGENCE OF THE FLESH NOT WITH REPULSION, BUT WITH PROFOUND MEANING IN WHICH WE FIND BEAUTY.
LUST MAY SEEM TO SOME A DUMB COMPULSION, BUT TWO BODIES COMING TOGETHER ALSO BRING TWO SOULS TOGETHER.
DESPITE THE WOMAN'S ANIMALISTIC DESIRE FOR HER CHOSEN MATE, FEAR OF PENETRATION MUST STILL BE STRONG FOR HER, AS SHE MUST TAKE INSIDE THAT WHICH IS ALIEN AND GROW THE UNKNOWN FUTURE OF HER RACE.
THE FEMALE IS ONE PERSON BEFORE IMPREGNATION, ANOTHER AFTER. ONE LIFE IS OVER, A NEW ONE IS BEGUN.
WHO WOULD NOT BE AFRAID?
YOU SEE, THERE MUST ALWAYS BE A LITTLE DEATH FOR METEMPSYCHOSIS -- THE TRANSMIGRATION OF A SOUL -- TO TAKE PLACE.
UNDT WHOSE SOUL SHALL BE SUMMONED?
AT A CELLULAR LEVEL, THE FEMALE OF OUR SPECIES ALSO MAKES THIS CHOICE. EVEN IF SHE HAS TAKEN TWO LOVERS, JUDICIOUS CONTROL OF HER ORGASM CAN CHOOSE THE SPERM THAT IS ADMITTED TO HER OVUM.

UNDT WHAT OF HER SUITORS? WHY IS THE MALE SO ENSLAVED TO THE DREAM OF MAKING A WOMAN HIS OWN? WHY DOES HE RISK LIVING THE NIGHTMARE OF LOSING HER TO ANOTHER MAN'S GENES?
SURVIVAL, AFTER ALL, IS EIN ZERO-SUM GAME.
NO MATTER HOW WELL A MAN -- OR A SPECIES -- ADAPTS TO HIS ENVIRONMENT, HE CAN NEVER RELAX, BECAUSE HIS COMPETITORS UNDT ENEMIES ARE ALSO ADAPTING.
IN THIS WAY, EVOLUTION IS EIN DIRECTIONLESS PROCESS.
THE SMARTER MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RACE -- BOTH MALE UNDT FEMALE -- ONLY REALLY USE THEIR INTELLIGENCE TO OUTWIT EACH OTHER...
IN THIS WAY, WE BECOME FETISHISTIC GENOSEXUAL PREDATORS WILLING TO DECEIVE, INVEIGLE UNDT OBFUSCATE TRUTH SO THAT ONE MIGHT OUTRUN THE OTHER. SO THAT WE CAN MATE WITH THE PARTNER OF OUR CHOOSING.

THIS CHESS GAME OF SEX UNDT GENE-SWAPPING DOES NOT LEAD TO SOME ENLIGHTENED LAND OF PEACE UNDT HARMONY. THERE IS NO MORAL HIGH GROUND IN GENETICS, ONLY THE SUCCESS OF SOME GENES AND THE FAILURE OF OTHERS. THERE IS ONLY ONE TASK THAT MATTERS... THE SEDUCTION OF THE RED QUEEN.
IF WE CAN CAPTURE HER, IT IS CHECKMATE FOR THE RED KING.


PANYA HAS NOT SEEN OBADIAH HORN LIKE THIS BEFORE.
FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS SHE HAS FOUND HERSELF CAUGHT IN HIS GAZE, AS IF HE IS STUDYING HER EVERY MOVE.
SHE WONDERS IF HE ALSO STUDIED SAHARA IN SUCH A FASHION.
OR PERHAPS HIS SENSES HAVE PIERCED HER DISGUISE, DESPITE THE MASKS PROVIDED BY HIS CIGAR SMOKE AND SAHARA'S PERFUMES.
BUT THEN, WHAT MAN DOESN'T STUDY HIS BRIDE-TO-BE IN SUCH MINUTE DETAIL?
WHAT MAN WOULDN'T WANT TO ENJOY THE SMELL OF HER HAIR, THE SWEET FRAGRANCE OF HER CINNAMON SKIN?
SO SHE SMILES AND ALLOWS HIS EYES TO TAKE IN EVERY CURVE AND CONTOUR OF THE WOMAN HE BELIEVES TO BE SAHARA...
SHE KEEPS UP HER ACT.
BECAUSE SHE IS NOT SAHARA.

GROWTH UNDT DECAY. PARASITE UNDT ANTIPARASITE.
THE RED QUEEN KEEPS US RUNNING BECAUSE SEX EXISTS ONLY SO THAT WE MIGHT RESIST *DISEASE*, BECAUSE WE *MUST* OUTEVOLVE THE MONSTERS -- THE VIRUSES UNDT BACTERIA -- THAT ULTIMATELY WISH TO *DESTROY* US.
IT IS SIMPLE *SURVIVAL*.
CONSCIOUSLY UNDT *UNCONSCIOUSLY* MALE UNDT FEMALE SEEK OUT SEXUAL PARTNERS WITH STRONG GENES THAT ENABLE THEM TO RESIST THE VIRULENT PARASITES INSIDE THEIR OWN BODIES...
SIMULTANEOUSLY, OUR PARASITES ALSO *FIGHT RESISTANCE* BY MUTATING IN CYCLICAL UNDT *RANDOM* WAYS.
THESE CREATURES INSIDE ARE ALSO ENGAGED IN GENE SWAPPING, HAVING SEX UNDT *MULTIPLYING* INSIDE OUR OWN BODIES.
NO WONDER WE HAVE *NIGHTMARES*. NO WONDER WE IMAGINE *MONSTERS*.

IN PURSUIT OF THE RED QUEEN, RESOURCEFUL MEN ACQUIRE ***POWER*** UNDT ***ACCUMMULATE*** WEALTH.

THEY FILL ***HAREMS*** WITH ***CONCUBINES***, SELECTING THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN TO CARRY THEIR SEED.

THEY ***CUCKOLD*** THOSE POOR UNDT IGNORANT SOTS WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PLAY THE GAME.

IN RETURN, THEY TOO ARE CUCKOLDED BY THEIR OWN WOMEN WHO RAISE THEIR LOVER'S SONS AS THEIR HUSBANDS HEIRS.

NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.

IN THE JUNGLE, LIONS ***ASSASSINATE*** THE CUBS OF THE LION HE HAS FOUGHT TO TAKE HIS MATE.

IN WAR, SOLDIERS ***RAPE*** THE MOTHERS UNDT DAUGHTERS OF THE MEN THEY HAVE ***SLAIN***.

ALL THIS TO SERVE THE SAME END. TO ASSURE THE ***IMMORTALITY*** OF ONE'S OWN GENES.

THE WOMB THEN, IS THE PLACE OF ***BATTLE***.

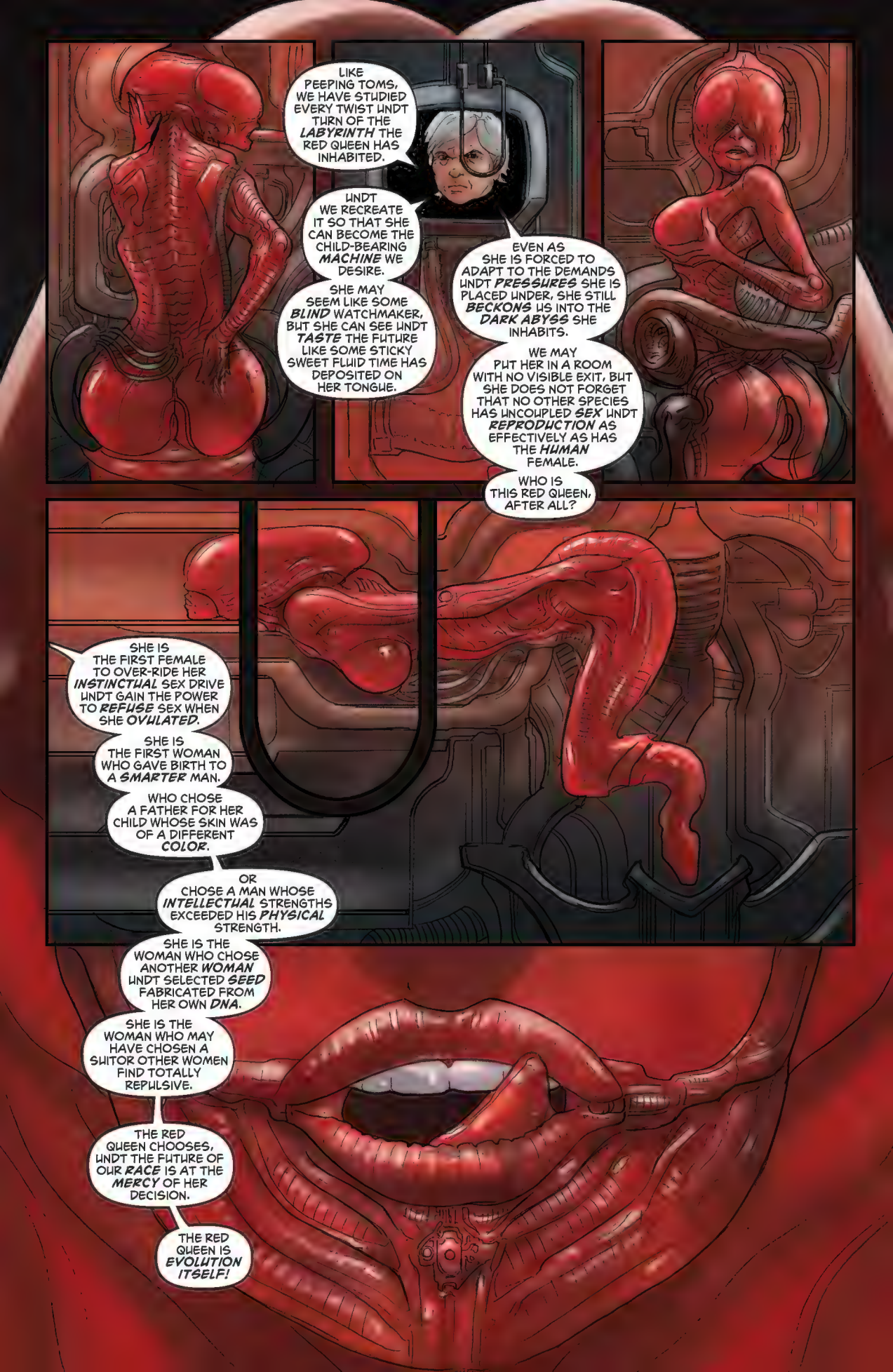
THE FEMALE'S ***EGG*** UNDT THE MALE'S ***SPERM*** ARE NOT ONLY THE MUNITIONS...

THEY ARE ALSO THE ***SPOILS*** OF WAR.

UNDT THE VALUE OF SUCH SPOILS?
HUMAN DNA IS CONSTANTLY STORING INFORMATION AT EIN GENETIC LEVEL THAT GUARANTEES OUR SPECIES CAN AND WILL EVOLVE.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.
WHEN CERTAIN FACTORS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT MANIFEST UNDT PLACE THE SURVIVAL OF OUR RACE UNDER THREAT, THAT INFORMATION MUST BE ACCESSED.
FORGOTTEN CODES, HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL'S GENES -- SOURCED UNDT SIEVED BY A MILLION, MILLION SEXUAL UNIONS OF MAN UNDT WOMAN -- IS RECOVERED SO THAT THE GENE'S OWNER CAN SURVIVE INTO ANOTHER GENERATION.
SURVIVE UNDT SEED THOSE GENES.
THE CREATURE THAT RESULTS CAN BE SO SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM ITS PREDECESSOR THAT IT HAS TO BE CATEGORIZED AS EIN NEW SPECIES.
IN THIS WAY, THE HUMAN RACE CAN PASS THROUGH THE BOTTLENECK THAT HAS SHAPED ALL HOMINID EVOLUTION...
THE PLACE THE MALE SO OFTEN WANTS TO VISIT...
THE PELVIC CANAL THAT LIMITS THE SIZE AND GROWTH OF THE HUMAN BRAIN.
THIS IS WHY THE MALE IS DRAWN TO THE FEMALE WITH WIDE HIPS UNDT FULL BREASTS .
SO THAT SHE CAN SUCCESSFULLY BEAR UNDT NOURISH A SMARTER CHILD.

PHUNT PHUNT
PHT
PHUNT
PHT
PHUNT
PHT
PHT
PHT
WHAT TH' HELL...?
THAT WAS MY COAT!
FTAM
UNNH!
SPCH
SHUNK

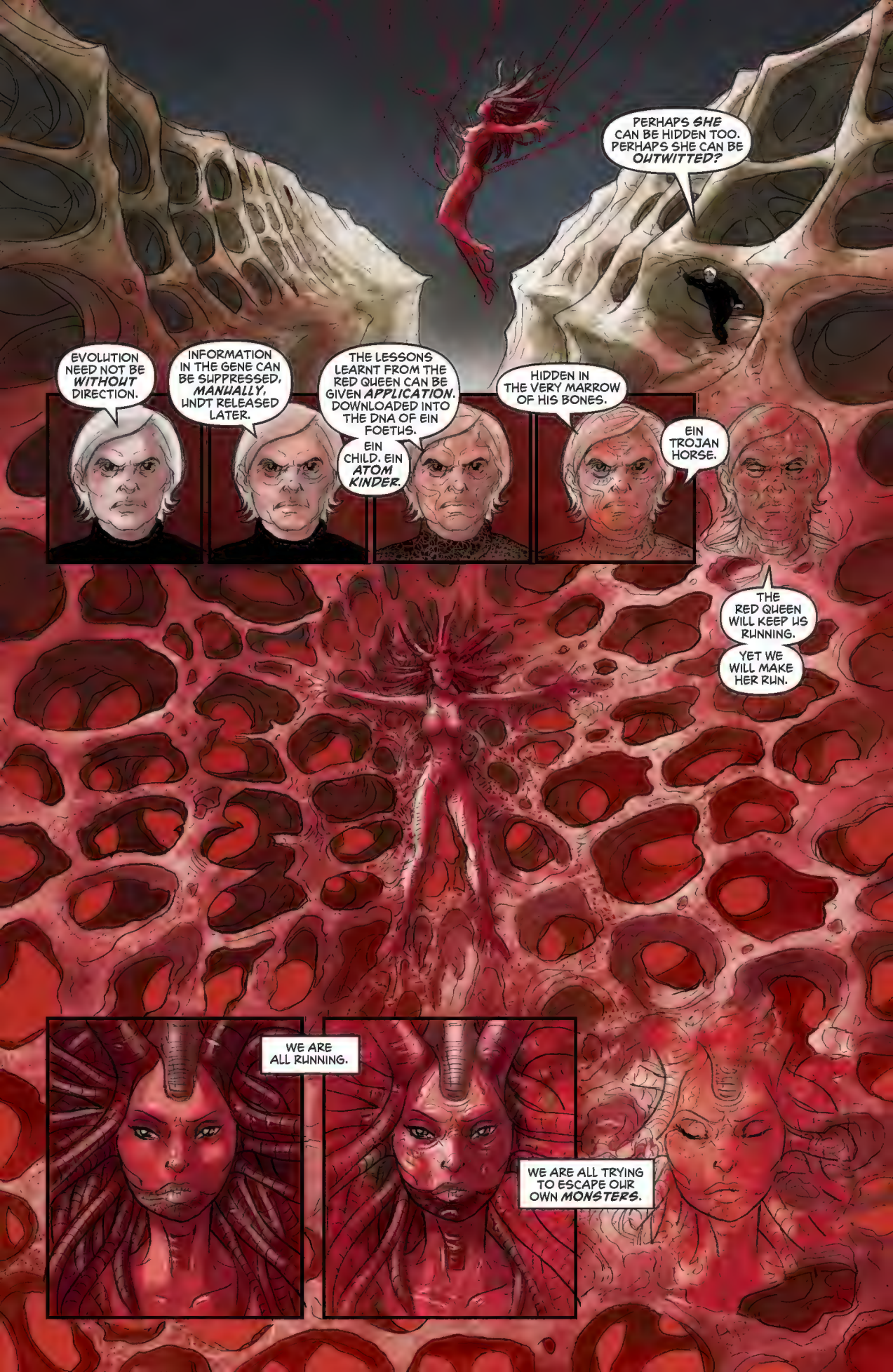
THE QUESTION IS -- CAN SUCH A PROCESS BE CONTROLLED?
CAN MAN HIMSELF DESIGN A NEW HUMAN SPECIES WHICH WILL BE FREE OF PARASITIC INFECTION? FREE OF DISEASE?
NOT A HYBRID, BUT A TOTALLY NEW SPECIES?
CAN WE DISTURB NATURE, BURROW INTO THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN GENOME UNDT MAKE HUMANITY STRONGER?
CAN WE INVADE UNDT DOMINATE THE PSYCHOSPHERE OF THE RED QUEEN?
SHE LIVES IN THE SECRET PASSAGEWAYS OF OUR DNA.
WILL SHE PERMIT US THERE?
FOR SOME MEN, UNDT WOMEN, PERMISSION IS IRRELEVANT.
THEY THINK NOT OF THE SURVIVAL OF THE SPECIES, BUT ONLY OF THEIR OWN GENES.
SO THEY ARE DRAWN -- LIKE BLOWFLIES TO A CARCASS -- TO THE RED QUEEN'S LAIR.
TO PROBE HER SECRETS.
THEY WANT TO CONTROL THE HIDDEN SUBCONSCIOUS MECHANISM OF EVOLUTION.
YES, WE CAN CHOOSE TO OVERRIDE OUR EVOLUTIONARY IMPERATIVES.
STRICTLY SPEAKING, THE SPERM IS NO LONGER NEEDED TO FERTILIZE THE EGG, ONLY THE DNA. THE HEALTHY, THE FIT UNDT THE POWERFUL CAN DESIGN THEIR CHILDREN.
BUT WHAT OF THE PERVERSE, THE DISEASED, UNDT THE UGLY? ARE THE UNFIT WITHOUT VALUE?
UNDT IS THERE ANYTHING MORE PERVERSE THAN SEX GOVERNED BY TECHNOLOGY? MUST LUST ITSELF BE REPLACED BY MACHINES?
BELIEF IN THE POWERFUL ILLUSION OF DELIBERATE DESIGN SEEKS TO MAKE MAN GOD, UNDT SEX IRRELEVANT.
IN THIS WAY, WE TRAP UNDT IMPRISON THE RED QUEEN, WE SEEK TO MAKE HER DO OUR BIDDING.


LIKE PEEPING TOMS, WE HAVE STUDIED EVERY TWIST UNDT TURN OF THE LABYRINTH THE RED QUEEN HAS INHABITED.
UNDT WE RECREATE IT SO THAT SHE CAN BECOME THE CHILD-BEARING MACHINE WE DESIRE.
SHE MAY SEEM LIKE SOME BLIND WATCHMAKER, BUT SHE CAN SEE UNDT TASTE THE FUTURE LIKE SOME STICKY SWEET FLUID TIME HAS DEPOSITED ON HER TONGUE.
EVEN AS SHE IS FORCED TO ADAPT TO THE DEMANDS UNDT PRESSURES SHE IS PLACED UNDER, SHE STILL BECKONS US INTO THE DARK ABYSS SHE INHABITS.
WE MAY PUT HER IN A ROOM WITH NO VISIBLE EXIT, BUT SHE DOES NOT FORGET THAT NO OTHER SPECIES HAS UNCOUPLED SEX UNDT REPRODUCTION AS EFFECTIVELY AS HAS THE HUMAN FEMALE.
WHO IS THIS RED QUEEN, AFTER ALL?
SHE IS THE FIRST FEMALE TO OVER-RIDE HER INSTINCTUAL SEX DRIVE UNDT GAIN THE POWER TO REFUSE SEX WHEN SHE OVULATED.
SHE IS THE FIRST WOMAN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO A SMARTER MAN.
WHO CHOSE A FATHER FOR HER CHILD WHOSE SKIN WAS OF A DIFFERENT COLOR.
OR CHOSE A MAN WHOSE INTELLECTUAL STRENGTHS EXCEEDED HIS PHYSICAL STRENGTH.
SHE IS THE WOMAN WHO CHOSE ANOTHER WOMAN UNDT SELECTED SEED FABRICATED FROM HER OWN DNA.
SHE IS THE WOMAN WHO MAY HAVE CHOSEN A SUITOR OTHER WOMEN FIND TOTALLY REPULSIVE.
THE RED QUEEN CHOOSES, UNDT THE FUTURE OF OUR RACE IS AT THE MERCY OF HER DECISION.
THE RED QUEEN IS EVOLUTION ITSELF!

BUT CAN MAN SEIZE CONTROL OF HIS SPECIES' GENES?
IF HE CAN KEEP THE RED QUEEN IN EIN STATE OF EROTO-MECHANICAL ECSTACY...
...CAN HE STOP HER FROM CHOOSING THE DNA SHE PREFERS?
UNDT, IF SO, HAVE WE REALLY COME SO VERY FAR?
IN THE ILIAD, THE FOUNDING MYTH OF WESTERN CULTURES, A TROJAN WAR BEGINS OVER THE ABDUCTION OF A WOMAN.
IN THOSE TIMES, HIGH-BORN WOMEN WERE HELD AS PRIZES OF WAR, AS SLAVES.
THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED IS SIMPLY THE STORY OF MEN DRIVEN TO RAGE BY THE THOUGHT OF OTHER MEN SLEEPING WITH THEIR WIVES OR DAUGHTERS.
UNDT BEYOND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE OF SUCH CUCKOLDING, WE SEE AGAIN THE FEAR OF KITH UNDT KIN CARRYING THE GENES OF OUR ENEMY INTO THE NEXT GENERATION.
THIS IS THE PROBLEM THEN, MAN'S FASCINATION WITH IMPREGNATION. HIS DESIRE TO ASSURE THE NATURE OF HIS PROGENY.
IF HE WANTS THE RED QUEEN TO PRODUCE A WEAPON IN THE CONSTANT BATTLE FOR POWER UNDT DOMINATION...
...THEN SHE IS ALSO A WEAPON.
EIN DEATH DELIVERY MACHINE.
EIN TROJAN HORSE.
IF NATURE CAN HIDE INFORMATION DEEP WITHIN THE CELLS OF HUMAN BEINGS, THEN SO CAN MAN.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.

ARE THEY DEAD?
AS DOORNAILS, MY FRIEND. GOOD SHOT. THANKS.
BEANS AND CHEESE, HIP!
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE?
MIKI, I CAN ONLY TELL YOU ONE THING FOR SURE...
...THESE GOONS WEREN'T HERE FOR A FITTING.
SO WHERE DO WE HIDE SAHARA NOW?
WHERE DO WE GO?
THOSE ARE MY FATHER'S MEN, MIKI. HE HAS NEVER SEEN ME AS ANYTHING MORE THAN PROPERTY.
IF HE IS LOOKING FOR ME AGAIN, HE MUST SOMEHOW KNOW ABOUT THE BABY.
I HAVE NO CHOICE NOW.
THERE'S REALLY ONLY ONE PLACE I CAN GO TO BE SAFE, ISN'T THERE, HIERONYMOUS?

PERHAPS NIGHTMARES WNDT PARASITES INHABIT OUR IMAGINATIONS WNDT BODIES FOR SOME PURPOSE.
WE MIGHT TRY TO ESCAPE, BUT MONSTERS CAN BE HIDDEN FROM US...
PERHAPS THEY CAN BE HIDDEN FROM THE RED QUEEN HERSELF...


PERHAPS SHE CAN BE HIDDEN TOO. PERHAPS SHE CAN BE OUTWITTED?
EVOLUTION NEED NOT BE WITHOUT DIRECTION.
INFORMATION IN THE GENE CAN BE SUPPRESSED, MANUALLY, UNDT RELEASED LATER.
THE LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE RED QUEEN CAN BE GIVEN APPLICATION. DOWNLOADED INTO THE DNA OF EIN FOETUS.
EIN CHILD. EIN ATOM KINDER.
HIDDEN IN THE VERY MARROW OF HIS BONES.
EIN TROJAN HORSE.
THE RED QUEEN WILL KEEP US RUNNING.
YET WE WILL MAKE HER RUN.
WE ARE ALL RUNNING.
WE ARE ALL TRYING TO ESCAPE OUR OWN MONSTERS.

BUT WE CANNOT.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.
CAN YOU SPELL IT OUT FOR US, SAHARA?
THE ONLY PLACE I CAN BE SAFE NOW IS WITH OBADIAH.
NO MATTER WHAT HE MIGHT THINK OF HIS SON, IT'S TIME FOR HIM TO KNOW THAT HE IS A FATHER.
Uh, SAHARA, YOU DO KNOW HE'S GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW, RIGHT?
WELL THEN, ALL THE MORE REASON FOR ME TO BE AT HIS SIDE.
YEAH, LIKE THIS ISN'T GONNA BE A DISASTER AT ALL...
Oh, HEY, GRANGER.
I'M GONNA NEED TO BORROW A JACKET.

"Pistols are especially dangerous because you can't tell from the outside whether or not they are loaded."
H R GIGER
1940-2014

Richard Starkings
Story
With apologies to Giger, Ridley & Schlain

Axel Medellin
Art
With acknowledgment to the work of H R Giger

SARAH DELAINE *pinup art* · AXEL MEDELLIN *color*

THE RED QUEEN

ENH

ENNH

ENNH

ENNHHH

"The whole nature of man presupposes woman, both physically and spiritually. His system is tuned into woman from the start."
CARL JUNG

PART THREE

ANIMA

ENH

ALL DRESSED UP FOR THE LADIES, PRETTY BIRD?

AND ALWAYS SO MUCH NOISE. WANTING EVERYBODY TO TAKE NOTICE.

LOS ANGELES · 2260

RELAX. YOU REALLY DON'T NEED TO IMPRESS ME.

ENH

ENH

...?

SAHARA?

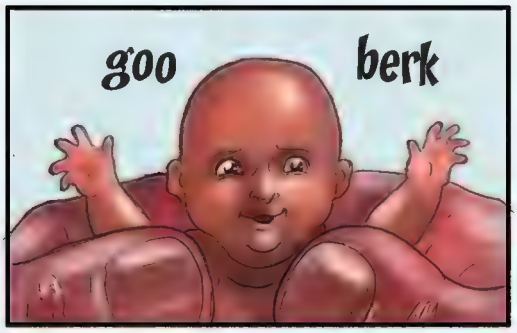
YOU DON'T *FRIGHTEN* ME, EITHER.

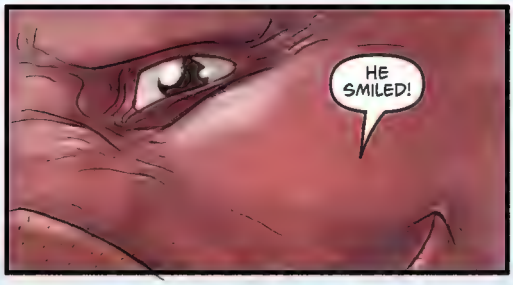
SAHARA?

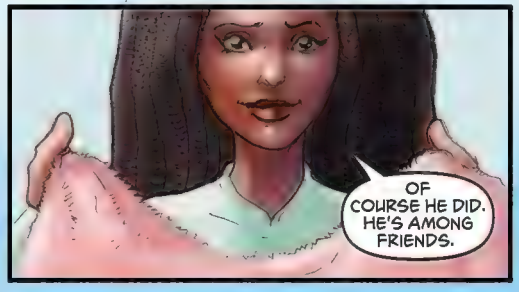
I GUESS FOOD ISN'T THE ONLY DELIVERY HERE TODAY...
I THINK SAHARA HAS SOME LOVE TO SIGN FOR.
EITHER THAT OR A TRUCK FULL OF TROUBLE.
ERYKUH, BE QUIET!
GIRLY, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO GIVE IT OUT FOR FREE.
IF YOUR PAPA FINDS OUT...
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO IF YOU'VE BEEN, Y'KNOW...
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, ERYKUH, YUSEF IS SWEET...
SWEET MY SWEET ASS. MEN ARE ALL THE SAME, SOME JUST...
SHTMP
WHAT...?

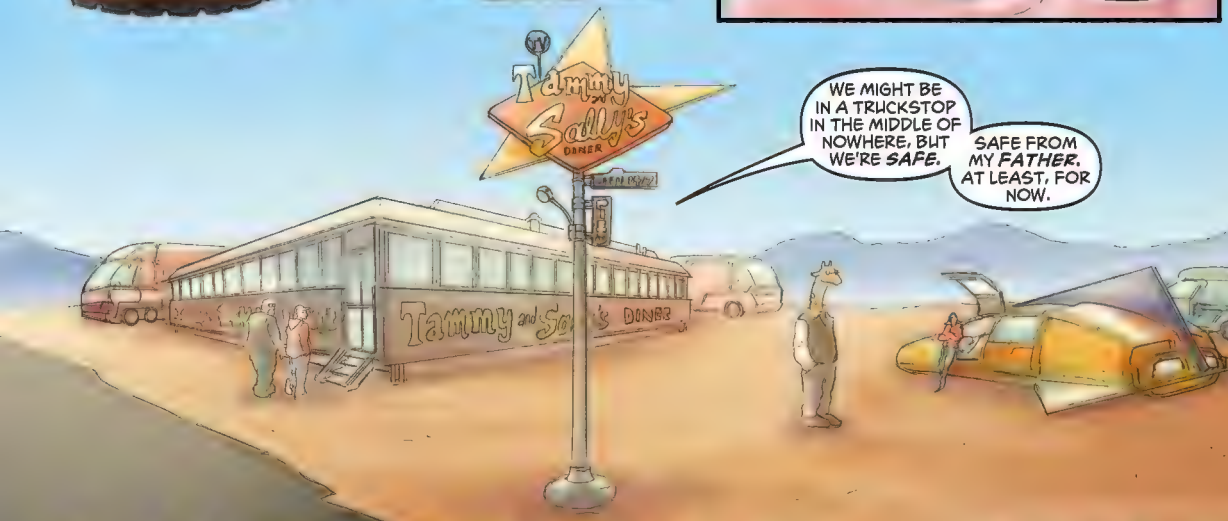
SHOTMP
SH TMP
SHMP
SH MP

YUSEF!
SHIT. SHITSHIT SHIT...
PLEASE, I--I DIDN'T KNOW...
KRTAKATA
NEVER FORGET THIS, SAHARA. YOU ARE MINE, BODY AND SOUL.
NO MATTER WHO YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO LOVE, NO MATTER WHERE YOU MIGHT TRY TO HIDE.








Tammy and Sally's DINER
WE MIGHT BE IN A TRUCKSTOP IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, BUT WE'RE SAFE.
SAFE FROM MY FATHER. AT LEAST, FOR NOW.

BAKERSFIELD • 2260

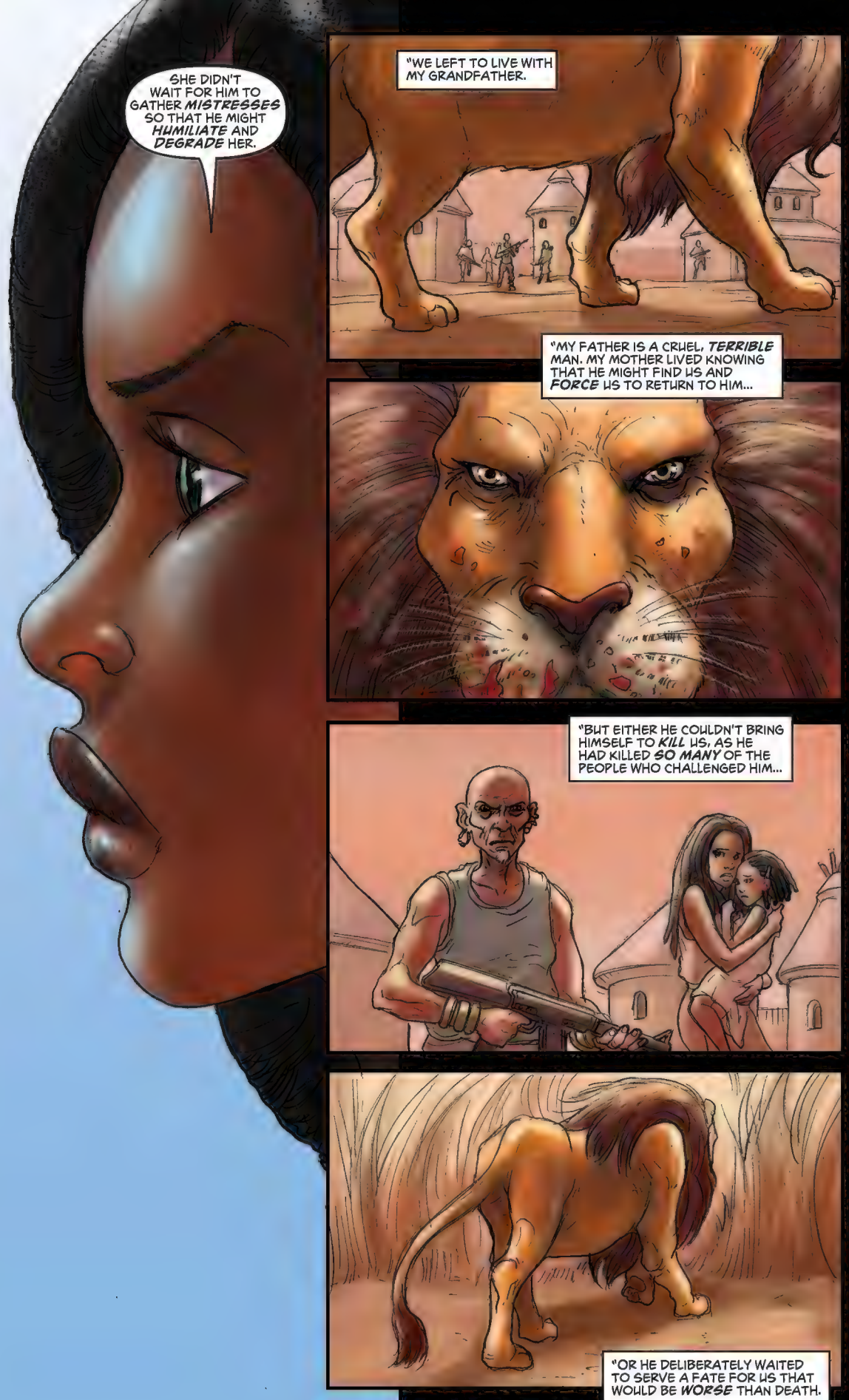
OBADIAH.
YOU SEEM LOST IN THOUGHT.
WHAT TROUBLES YOU, MY LOVE?
SAHARA...?
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU.
ABOUT STORIES YOU ONCE TOLD ME.
ABOUT YOUR FATHER.
ABOUT THE TIME YOU SPENT WITH HIM... IN AFRICA, BEFORE THE WAR.
IVORY TOWERS HOTEL

OBADIAH, YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT MY FATHER.
AND CERTAINLY NOT TODAY OF ALL DAYS.
NO, OF COURSE. FORGIVE ME.
WE WERE BOTH DISAPPOINTED BY OUR CREATORS, WERE WE NOT?
OUR FATHERS MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN OUR MOTHERS.
BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY CHOSE TO LOVE US.
YOU KNOW TOO WELL THAT MY FATHER RETURNS TO ME IN ANXIOUS DREAMS.
NIGHTMARES OF FEAR AND ANGER AND BLOOD.
I AM LUCKY TO HAVE FOUND A MAN WHO IS SO MUCH MORE TO ME THAN MY FATHER COULD EVER BE.
WE ARE FORTUNATE INDEED.
BUT ISN'T IT CONSIDERED UNLUCKY FOR THE GROOM TO SEE HIS BRIDE ON THE DAY OF THEIR WEDDING?
SHE MAY NOT BE THE WOMAN OBADIAH THINKS SHE IS, BUT PANYA HAS CERTAINLY LEARNED HOW TO PLAY THE PART.
HORN MAY HAVE HIS DOUBTS, BUT, FOR NOW, THAT IS ALL THEY ARE.
THERE IS ONLY ONE QUESTION ON PURCHASE'S SYNTHETIC MIND.
WHERE IS THE REAL SAHARA?

SO NOW CAN YOU TELL ME WHY YOU WANTED TO MEET THIS FAR OUT OF TOWN TO DRIVE A TWENTY-EIGHT WHEELER BACK INTO TOWN...?
I MEAN I'M GLAD THAT I HAVE SOME SKILLS THAT MAKES ME USEFUL TO YOU, BUT...
WELL, HELL-O THERE...
THIS IS FARRELL? HIP, I THOUGHT YOU SAID HE WAS BALD WITH BUCK TEETH?
IMPLANTS I'LL BET...
THE ONLY SKILL YOU HAVE, JACK, IS THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE A HEAVY GOODS LICENSE AND YOU FIT BEHIND THE WHEEL.
NOW GET UP HERE AND DRIVE.
AND NO FLIRTING!
THAT GOES DOUBLE FOR YOU, MIKI.
I ALWAYS SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR YOU, HIP.

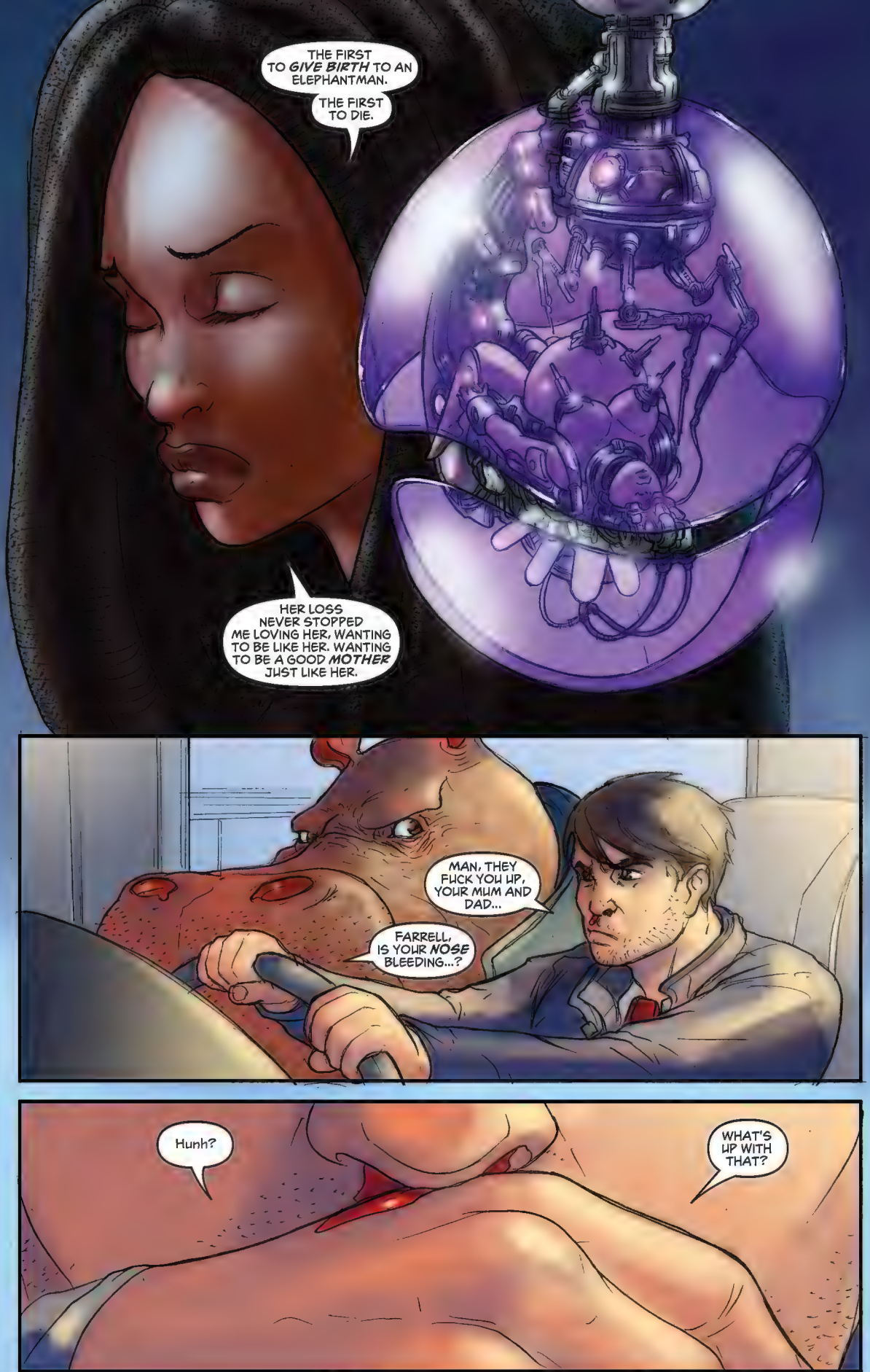
HEY, DID YOU GUYS, LIKE, CALL AND COORDINATE THIS MORNING?
Huh?
OF COURSE WE DID. DAMN FOOL'S HERE, ISN'T HE?
HIP HAS SUCH A SMOOTH WAY WITH WORDS, WHY *WOULDN'T* I BE?
HEY, NICE JACKET.
SO MUCH BETTER THAN THAT *TENT* YOU WERE WEARING...
THAT WAS MY *FAVOURITE* COAT!
I'M GLAD THEIR JACKETS GET ALONG.
DON'T WORRY, GRANGER. I TRUST HIP WITH MY LIFE.
IF HE BELIEVES IN FARRELL, THEN SO DO I.

SAHARA, RIGHT? HIP ASSURES ME YOU'RE THE REAL MCCOY?
IS IT TRUE SOME BODY DOUBLE HAS TAKEN YOUR PLACE IN IVORY TOWERS?
IT'S TRUE. I AM SAHARA.
THANK YOU FOR HELPING US, MISTER FARRELL.
AND THIS MUST BE YOUR KID, HORN'S BABY? HEY, GOOD FOR THAT BOY HE HAS YOUR LOOKS!
HALF BREEDS ALWAYS HAVE TOUGH LIVES.
A WOUNDED CHILDHOOD CAN CRACK OPEN A PATH OF LEARNING THAT LEADS TO FORGIVENESS.
OUR CHILD WILL LIVE A LIFE I WAS DENIED.
HE WILL BE RAISED BY A LOVING FATHER.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, MISTER FARRELL...
"MY FATHER HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSUMED BY GREED. BY ANGER. BY ARROGANCE AND HIS FOOLISHNESS.
"HE CHOSE MY MOTHER FOR THE SAME REASONS HE LATER DETESTED HER.
"THE EPITOME OF AFRICAN WOMANHOOD, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, FULL-BREASTED AND AS STRONG AS AN OX.
"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE MY FATHER DECIDED HE DIDN'T LIKE THOSE QUALITIES IN HIS WIFE AFTER ALL...
"AND, OF COURSE, MY MOTHER EVENTUALLY SAW HIM FOR THE MONSTER HE REALLY WAS..."


SHE DIDN'T WAIT FOR HIM TO GATHER MISTRESSES SO THAT HE MIGHT HUMILIATE AND DEGRADE HER.
"WE LEFT TO LIVE WITH MY GRANDFATHER.
"MY FATHER IS A CRUEL, TERRIBLE MAN. MY MOTHER LIVED KNOWING THAT HE MIGHT FIND US AND FORCE US TO RETURN TO HIM...
"BUT EITHER HE COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO KILL US, AS HE HAD KILLED SO MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO CHALLENGED HIM...
"OR HE DELIBERATELY WAITED TO SERVE A FATE FOR US THAT WOULD BE WORSE THAN DEATH.

AFRICA • 2224
"MAPPO PROVIDED THAT FOR HIM.
"MY FATHER SOLD THE WOMEN IN OUR VILLAGE TO MAPPO. ALL OF THEM
"THEY CAME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
"THEY KILLED MY GRANDFATHER. THEY KILLED EVERY MAN IN OUR VILLAGE.
"EVERY WOMAN TAKEN, EVERY MAN AND EVERY CHILD KILLED... EVERY CHILD EXCEPT ONE...
"MY FATHER MADE SURE THAT I WAS WITNESS TO THIS ATROCITY...

I WAS FOUND BY MY FATHER A MONTH LATER IN A REFUGEE CAMP.
HE TOOK ME.
GAVE ME TO ONE OF HIS BOY SOLDIERS. I WAS RAPED.
AND I WAS FORCED TO SPEND MY CHILDHOOD AS A PROSTITUTE.
I NEVER KNEW WHERE MY MOTHER HAD BEEN TAKEN OR IF ANYONE WOULD SAVE ME.
"IT WASN'T UNTIL I WAS RESCUED FROM MY FATHER BY THE U.N THAT I LEARNED OF MAPPO'S TRANSGENICS PROGRAM.
"MY MOTHER WAS THE FIRST TO BE SELECTED FOR IMPREGNATION.


THE FIRST TO GIVE BIRTH TO AN ELEPHANTMAN.
THE FIRST TO DIE.
HER LOSS NEVER STOPPED ME LOVING HER, WANTING TO BE LIKE HER. WANTING TO BE A GOOD MOTHER JUST LIKE HER.
MAN, THEY FUCK YOU UP, YOUR MUM AND DAD...
FARRELL, IS YOUR NOSE BLEEDING...?
Hunh?
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

SHE HAD APPEARED TO HIM AS IF IN A DREAM.
AS IF SHE HAD EMERGED FROM HIS SUBCONSCIOUS. AS IF HE HAD KNOWN HER ALL HIS LIFE.
THE WAR WAS OVER, BUT THERE WAS STILL ANGER IN HIS HEART.
IN SAHARA'S GENTLE PRESENCE, HIS ANGER SUBSIDED.
HER TEMPERANCE HELD HIS SOUL IN A SOFT AND KIND, LOVING EMBRACE.
SHE WAS ALWAYS A CLEAR LIGHT WHERE HIS SHADOW FELL.
WHY THEN DOES HE NOT FEEL BATHED IN HER LIGHT TODAY, OF ALL DAYS?

WHY IS HE FEELING DARKNESS WELLING UP IN HIS SOUL ONCE AGAIN?
WHY DOES HE FEEL ONLY ANGER?
HATRED?
THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG HERE.

OBADIAH. SAHARA.
THE TWO OF YOU HAVE TRAVELLED A GREAT DISTANCE, PHYSICALLY *AND* SPIRITUALLY, SO THAT YOU COULD BE HERE *TOGETHER*, TODAY.
NEVERTHELESS, PLEASE BE CONVINCED THAT YOUR *UNION* IS A *BEGINNING* AND NOT AN END.
A HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE AS CLOSE AS FORM AND SHADOW, FLOWERS AND FRUIT, OR ROOTS AND LEAVES, IN EVERY EXISTENCE OF LIFE.
IF GRASS WITHERS, ORCHIDS GRIEVE. IF PINE TREES FLOURISH, OAKS REJOICE.
THE *HIYOKU* IS A BIRD WITH *ONE* BODY AND *TWO* HEADS. BOTH MOUTHS NOURISH THE SAME BODY...
HIBOKU ARE FISH WITH ONLY *ONE* EYE EACH, SO THE MALE AND THE FEMALE REMAIN TOGETHER FOR LIFE.
WHEN A HUSBAND IS HAPPY, HIS WIFE WILL BE FULFILLED.
IF A HUSBAND IS A *THIEF*, HIS WIFE WILL BECOME ONE TOO. THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF THIS LIFE ALONE.
SAHARA'S HAND IS WARM, BUT STILL HIS HEART IS COLD...
IT'S TRUE, *GABBATHA*...
THERE *HAS* BEEN A THEFT...

AND I'M HERE TO STOP IT!
FINALLY. A FOCUS FOR HIS ANGER.

4
STOP RIGHT THERE, OBADIAH.
YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE.
FISK

LOS ANGELES • 2260

CLEARLY, IT IS TIME TO CORRECT YOU.

UHH

ONCE AND FOR ALL!

THE RED QUEEN

"A woman possessed by the Animus is always in danger of losing her Femininity. No matter how Friendly and obliging a woman's Eros may be, no logic on earth can shake her if she is ridden by the animus."
CARL JUNG

MA'AM, I THINK IT'S TIME TO GET YOU *OUT* OF HERE.
NOT AT ALL, PURCHASE. DO YOU THINK THAT THE *REAL* SAHARA WOULD ABANDON HER *BELOVED* ON THEIR *WEDDING DAY?*
ASIDE FROM THAT, I FIND IT SOMEWHAT *THRILLING* TO SEE TWO POWERFUL CREATURES *FIGHT* OVER ME LIKE THIS.
WOULDN'T *ANY* WOMAN?

PART FOUR

ANIMUS

ERRH
BRING IT!

TWENTY MINUTES EARLIER

NO

NO NO

MUNTS DIE GOD LAUGHS

KILL ALL MUNTS

NO NO

TAKE YOUR HORN AND SHOVE IT!

NO MUNTS

NO NO NO

GOD IS NOT DEAD

DESERTS SHOULD BE BARREN!

NEITHER SHALL ANY WOMAN STAND BEFORE A BEAST TO LIE DOWN

GO USA!

GOD'S DESIGN NOT MAN'S REDESIGN!

OFFICERS SMITH AND JONES, *RIOT SUPPORT* FROM *EASTSIDE* L.A.P.D.

ONE OF THESE *CHILDREN OF GOD* FREAKS ABANDONED HER *TRUCK* AND HER *BABY* OUT HERE...

BRAKES ON SOME KINDA *AUTOLOCK*... ONE OF YOU LOCAL BOYS GOTTA GET SOME *TECH* GRUNTS OUT HERE TO *SHIFT* IT.

WE'RE TAKING THE *SQUIRT* TO THE HOTEL *MED SUPPORT*.

RATHER YOU THAN ME, MAN... WE GOT THE TRUCK. APPRECIATE THE HEADS-UP.

I HOPE YOU BOYS ARE ON *OVERTIME*... HORN INDUSTRIES IS PAYING THE BILL HERE ANYWAYS.

FOOOOOOOM

WHAT THE HELL?

IS THAT A TAXI?

WOOOHOOO!

GET ME TO THE ROOFTOP GARDENS, MIKI, I FIGURE I CAN BUY SAHARA ALL THE TIME SHE NEEDS...

SWEETIE, GATECRASHERS ARE THE *ONLY* FUN MEMBERS OF *ANY* WEDDING PARTY.

SKYCABS

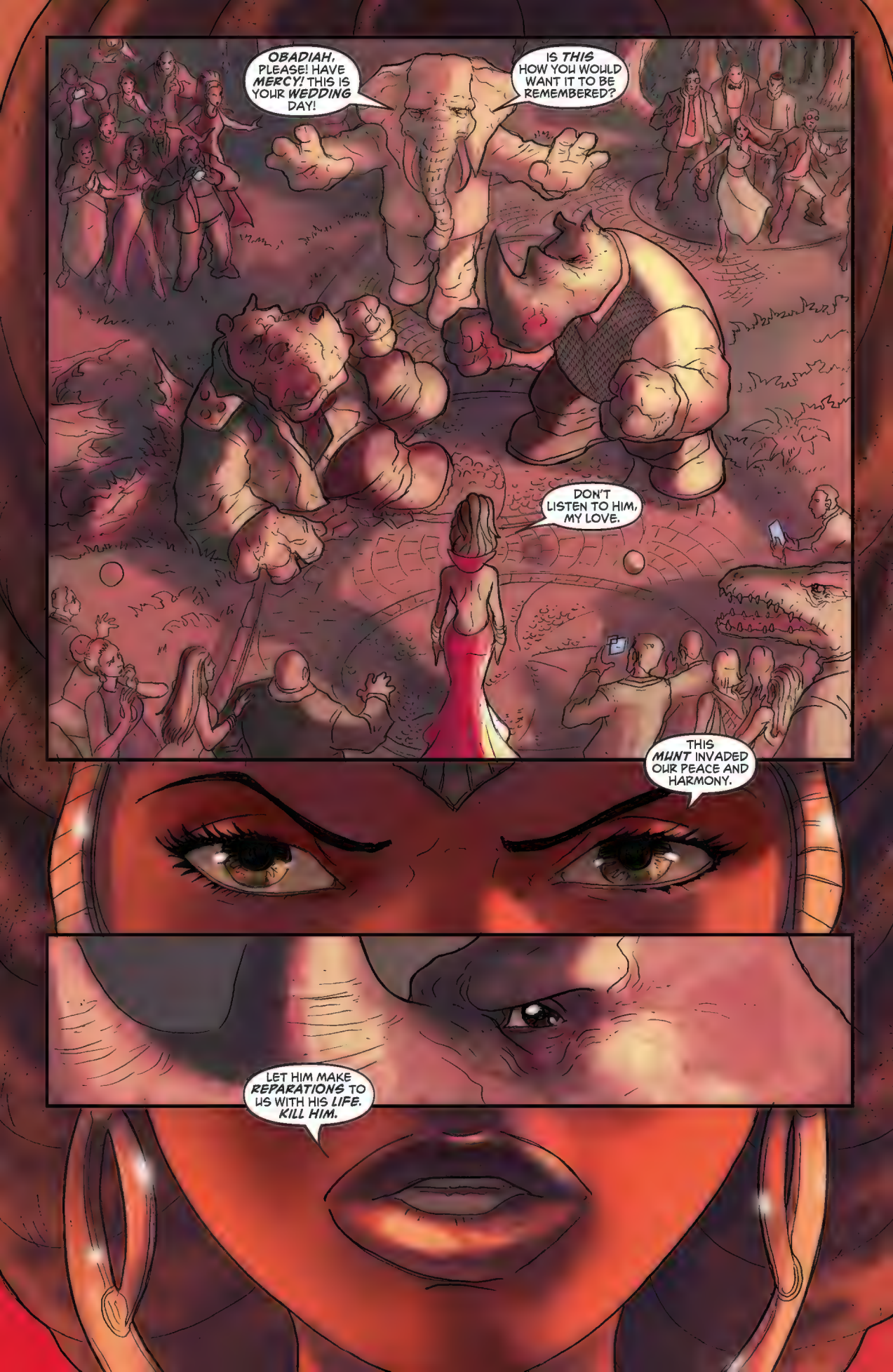
DON'TCHA LOVE TO PLAY DRESS UP, SAHARA?
I IMPERSONATED A POLICE OFFICER FOR THREE YEARS, IT STILL COMES EASY TO ME NOW.
YOU'RE TAKING A BIG RISK ON MY BEHALF, MISTER FARRELL, I AM IN YOUR DEBT.
YOU GOTTA THANK PROVIDENCE FOR THAT CHILDREN OF GOD DEMONSTRATION. SECURITY HERE MUST BE MAXED OUT!
THIS IS GONNA BE WAY EASIER THAN WE EXPECTED.
PSSHT
SSHHHHTTUMMM
AND THEN AGAIN...

FATHER.
SAHARA. OF COURSE.
YOU ARE SO LIKE YOUR MOTHER.
YOU LOVE WHAT YOU CLAIM TO DESPISE.
NEITHER ONE OF YOU COULD BEAR TO BE SEPARATED FROM MEN OF POWER OR INFLUENCE.
I KNEW YOU'D COME HERE.
YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT MUNT, HORN... YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT HIS ABILITY TO BREAK THE WILL OF THE WEAKLINGS THAT SURROUND HIM.
YOU USE THAT ANIMAL JUST AS WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS USED MEN..
BECAUSE YOU ARE THE WEAKER SEX.
HOW COULD YOU STAY AWAY?
NOW, HAVE YOUR CHIPMUNK PUT HIS GUN DOWN.
YOU AND THE CHILD ARE COMING WITH ME.
SURE! APPEAL TO MY NICE SIDE, SERENGHETI!
SAHARA, GET TO THE MAIN LOBBY.
I'LL DEAL WITH THESE PUNKS!
FTAM
FTAM
FTAM

GUNFIRE.
POLICE FIREARM DISCHARGED. OFFICER IN DANGER. UNITS Z-73 AND Z-76 RESPONDING.
KILL HIM!
CHAKATACHA
CHAKATACH
CHAKATAC
CHAKATACHA
CHUNGK
CHUKT
CHINGT
CHAKT
CHTTK
CHUNT

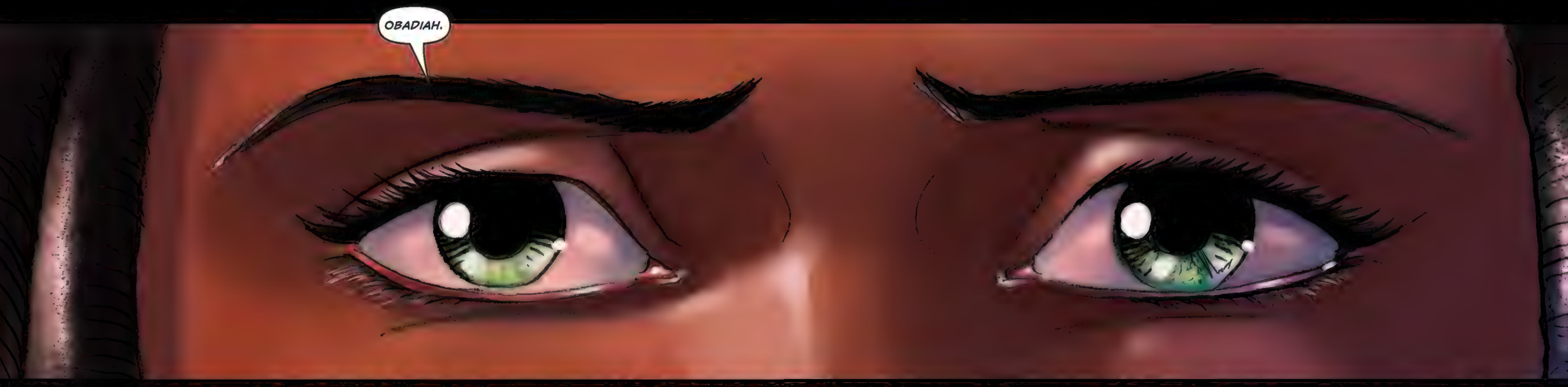
TRAKAKAKAKAKAKAKAK
UGHK!
TAKE COVER!
RUN, SAHARA, RUN! ME AND THE TIN BOYS IN BLUE HAVE GOT THIS!
RUN!
"DON'T CRY, SAHARA, DON'T CRY.
"ON THE SERENGHETI PLAINS OF AFRICA, IF YOU ARE AN ANTELOPE, YOU HAVE TO RUN FASTER THAN THE FASTEST LION TO SURVIVE.
"IF YOU ARE A LION, YOU HAVE TO RUN FASTER THAN THE SLOWEST ANTELOPE TO SURVIVE...
"SO, EITHER WAY, WHEN THE SUN RISES IN THE MORNING...
MAMA...
"YOU HAD BETTER BE RUNNING."
FTAM
FTAM

NOW
SHUNK
FRAKKT
WHNCH
KRAKK


OBADIAH, PLEASE! HAVE MERCY! THIS IS YOUR WEDDING DAY!
IS THIS HOW YOU WOULD WANT IT TO BE REMEMBERED?
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, MY LOVE.
THIS MUNT INVADED OUR PEACE AND HARMONY.
LET HIM MAKE REPARATIONS TO US WITH HIS LIFE. KILL HIM.

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG HERE.
BUT OBADIAH'S SOUL BELONGS TO SAHARA...
HE CANNOT DISOBEY HER.

5

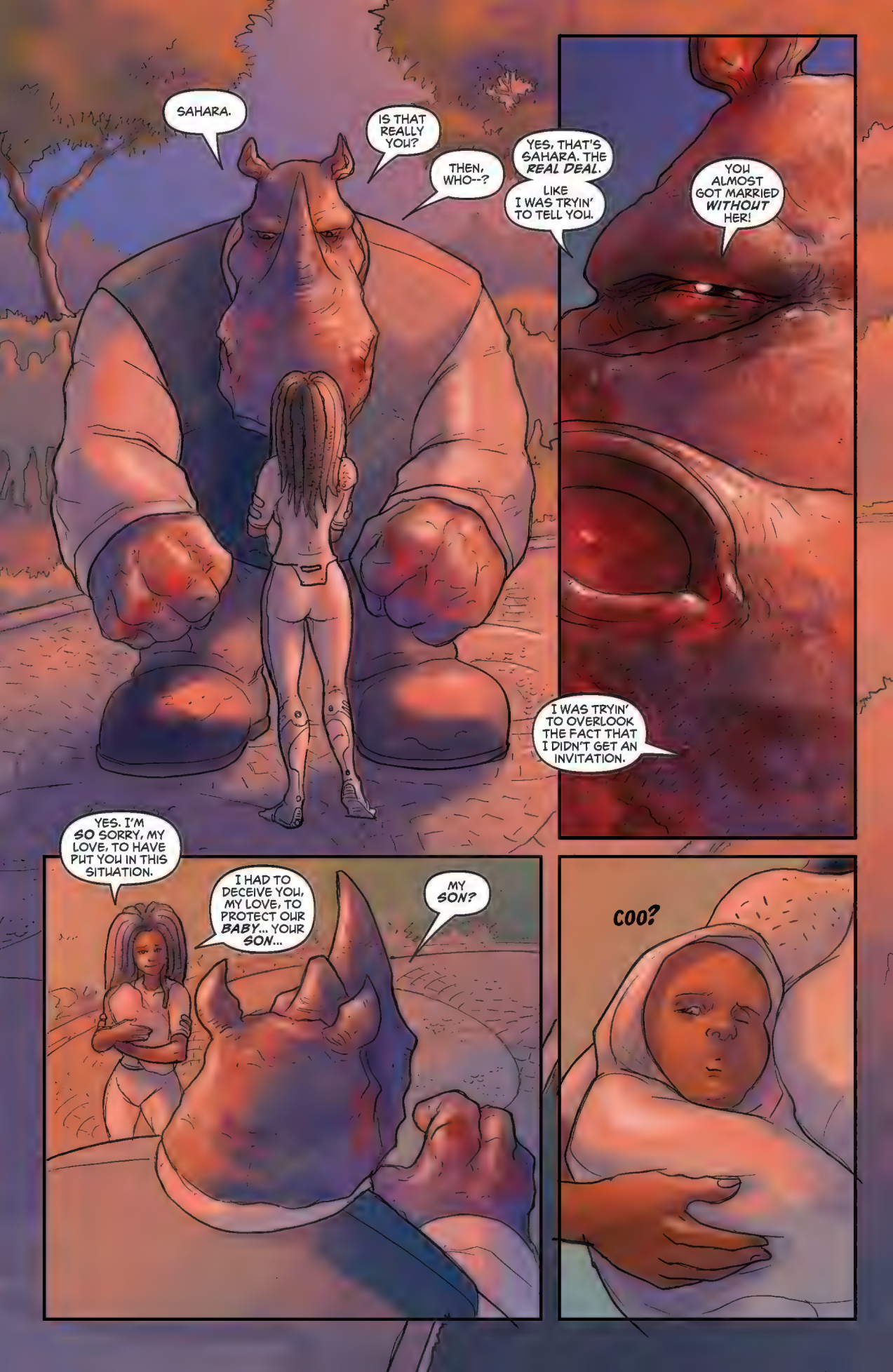

OBADIAH.

OBADIAH.

NO.

THE RED QUEEN

OBADIAH, MY LOVE.
HIERONYMOUS IS OUR FRIEND.
HE IS ALSO MY BROTHER.
YOU KNOW THAT. YOU HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT.


SAHARA.
IS THAT REALLY YOU?
THEN, WHO--?
YES, THAT'S SAHARA. THE REAL DEAL.
LIKE I WAS TRYIN' TO TELL YOU.
YOU ALMOST GOT MARRIED WITHOUT HER!
I WAS TRYIN' TO OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT I DIDN'T GET AN INVITATION.
YES. I'M SO SORRY, MY LOVE, TO HAVE PUT YOU IN THIS SITUATION.
I HAD TO DECEIVE YOU, MY LOVE, TO PROTECT OUR BABY... YOUR SON...
MY SON?
COO?

"Wholeness is an objective factor that confronts the subject independently of him, like the anima or animus; and just as the latter have a higher position in the hierarchy than the shadow, so wholeness lays claim to a position and a value superior to those of the syzygy.

?

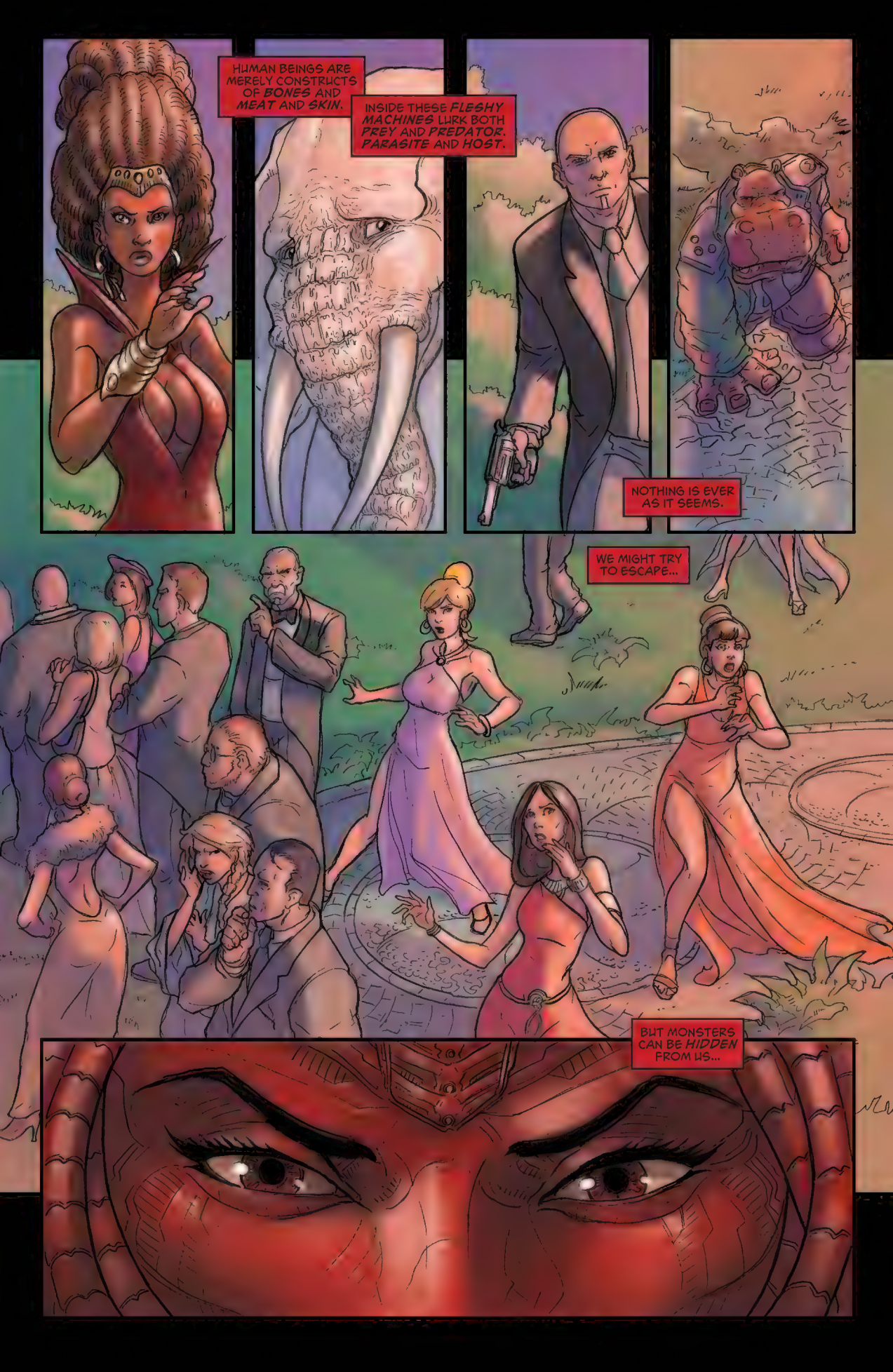
"The syzygy seems to represent at least a substantial portion of it, if not actually two halves of the totality formed by the royal brother-sister pair, and hence the tension of opposites from which the divine child is born as the symbol of unity."

CARL JUNG

PART FIVE

SYZYGY

WE ARE ALL RUNNING.
WE ARE ALL TRYING TO ESCAPE OUR OWN MONSTERS.
Oh.

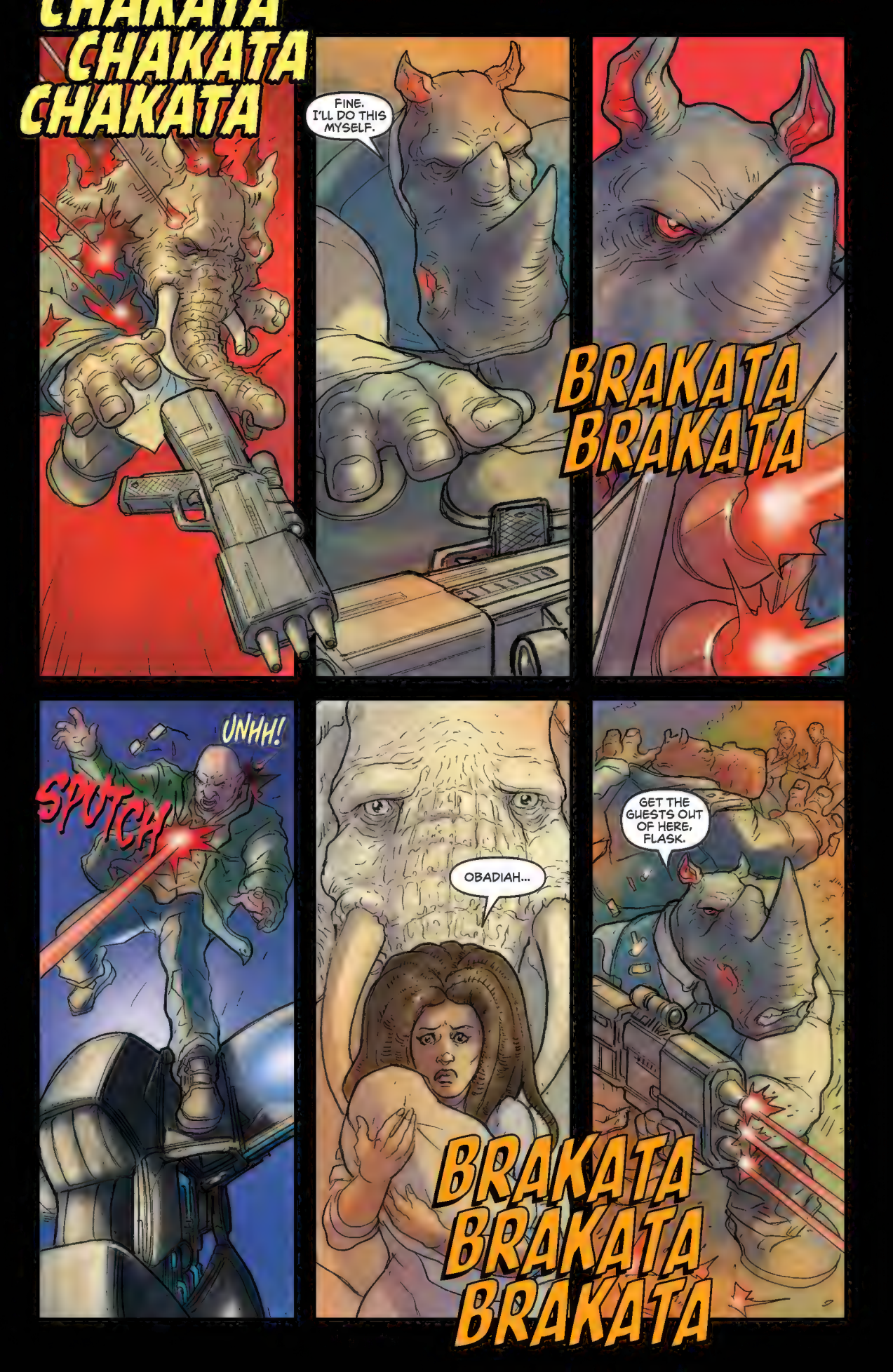

HUMAN BEINGS ARE MERELY CONSTRUCTS OF BONES AND MEAT AND SKIN.
INSIDE THESE FLESHY MACHINES LURK BOTH PREY AND PREDATOR. PARASITE AND HOST.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.
WE MIGHT TRY TO ESCAPE...
BUT MONSTERS CAN BE HIDDEN FROM US...

IF NATURE CAN HIDE INFORMATION DEEP WITHIN THE CELLS OF HUMAN BEINGS, THEN SO CAN MAN.
EVOLUTION NEED NOT BE *WITHOUT* DIRECTION.
INFORMATION IN THE GENE CAN BE SUPPRESSED, *MANUALLY*, AND RELEASED LATER.
HIDDEN IN THE VERY MARROW OF BONES.
IN THE DNA OF A FOETUS.
LIKE A *TROJAN HORSE*.
NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS.
WHAT...?
BY THE SANDS...!
AS MUCH AS I DON'T WANT TO *INTERRUPT* THIS LITTLE FAMILY *REUNION*...
HEADS UP...

GUESTS OF THIS TRAVESTY OF A WEDDING, YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE...
I AM HERE AS THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE.
BUT, DON'T WORRY, THERE WILL BE NO AFFECTIONATE, FAWNING SPEECH.
LET'S GO STRAIGHT TO CUTTING THE CAKE.
PSHOO PSHOO PSHOO
CHAKATA CHAKATA CHAKATA
OOP
AIEEEEE

SERENGHET! HOLY MOTHER OF MUD!
SAHARA, GET BACK! WE PREPARED FOR THIS--!
OKAY, MUNTS, YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT HERE AS DANCE PARTNERS.
NO, SIR.
RESPONDING.
ON IT!
BRAKATA BRAKATA BRAKATA

FTOOM
CHAKATA
CHAKATA
CHAKATA
UGH
WE'RE VULNERABLE IN THE AIR.
TAKE US DOWN.
TAKE OUT ALL THE GRUNTS BUT LEAVE THE WEDDING PARTY TO ME.
SHTMMMM
PSHOO
PSHOO
PSHOO


CHAKATA
CHAKATA
CHAKATA
FINE. I'LL DO THIS MYSELF.
BRAKATA
BRAKATA
UNHH!
SPUTCH
OBADIAH...
GET THE GUESTS OUT OF HERE, FLASK.
BRAKATA
BRAKATA
BRAKATA

DO YOU REALLY THINK *HUMAN SCUM* LIKE *YOU* CAN DEFEAT A *LIVING WEAPON* LIKE *ME*?!
THEN *SHOOT* ME DOWN.
THIS IS IT. THIS IS YOUR *CHANCE.*
SHOW MY DAUGHTER WHAT A COMPASSIONATE *MUNT* YOU REALLY ARE.

GABBATHA, PLEASE, HOLD THE BABY FOR ME ... I HAVE TO STOP THIS...
NO! GIVE ME THAT KID...
FATHER!
WHAT?!
PANYA! BY THE SEVEN SANDS... NO!

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT, ISN'T IT?
HERE...
Ah, THE CHILD. A BOY.
THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH BLOODSHED HERE, DON'T YOU THINK?
TAKE HIM AND GO...
Hmmp. SAHARA MUST HAVE TRAINED YOU HERSELF.
YOU ARE JUST AS ARROGANT, AS VAINGLORIOUS AND PRESUMPTIOUS AS SHE.
BUT YOU ARE WEAK. THERE IS NO SERENGHETI BLOOD IN YOU.
HOW WAS THAT JUMPED UP MUNT FOOLED SO EASILY BY YOU?
YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER CHEAP WHORE IN AN EXPENSIVE GOWN.
RUKKUTCHA

Uhh
KRTJAK
ENNH
PANYA...
ROSES.
PANYA HAD ASKED HORN FOR ROSES... FOR THE WEDDING. A HUNDRED... A THOUSAND ROSES.
IT'S HER ONLY THOUGHT AS OBLIVION CLAIMS HER...
WHY DID SHE ASK FOR SO MANY ROSES?
NO...
YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, SERENGHETI. HAND BACK MY CHILD.

YOUR CHILD? I THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOOLED AGAIN, MUNT. HE LOOKS NORMAL TO ME.
PERHAPS THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE GAINED HERE BY KEEPING THIS WRETCH ALIVE...
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, SAHARA? YOU ARE MINE, BODY AND SOUL.
NO MATTER WHO YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO LOVE, NO MATTER WHERE YOU MIGHT TRY TO HIDE.
FATHER, PLEASE... NO... TAKE ME INSTEAD... PLEASE... NOT MY CHILD!
SAHARA! STEP OUT OF THE WAY...
THIS ISN'T OVER.
BUT FOR NOW, I WILL TAKE PLEASURE FROM YOUR PAIN.
AND REST ASSURED, THIS WILL SOON FEEL LIKE NO MORE THAN A PIN PRICK.
SHTM
THEY DON'T EVEN REALISE IT.
THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF EVERY MUNT ON THE PLANET.
NO...

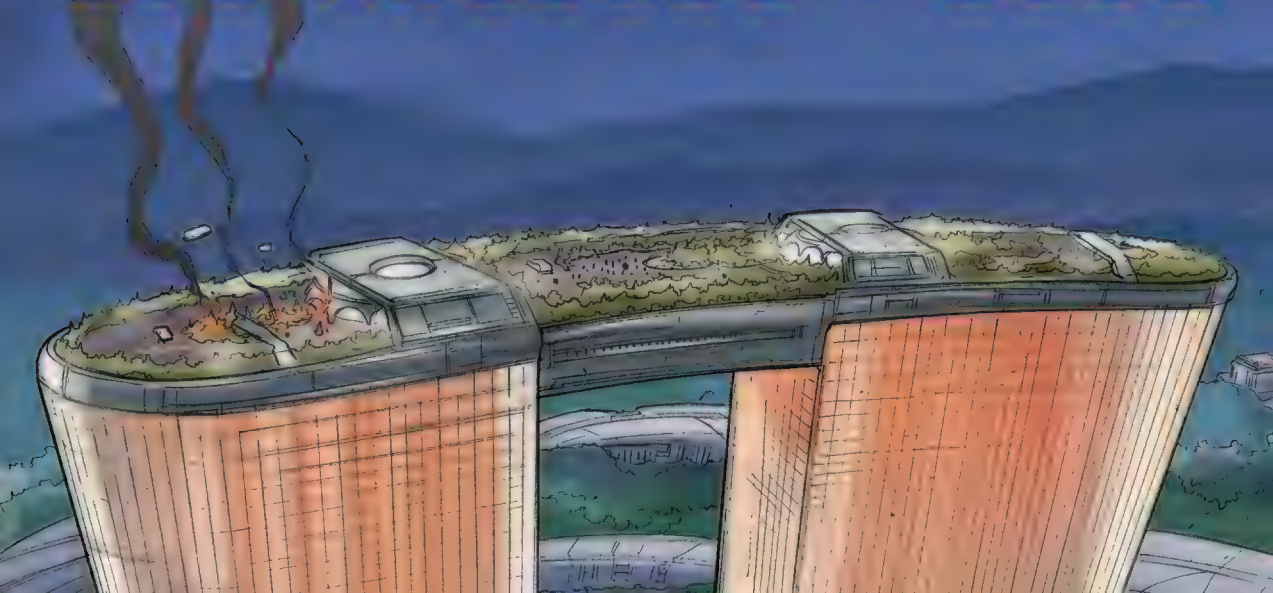
Oh MY.
I DIDN'T, I COULDN'T...
BLAM
SPTTCH

GABBATHA.
WHEN AM I GONNA LEARN--
WHKKT
NOT TO HOLD BACK?!

HOLD IT RIGHT, THERE. STEP AWAY FROM MISTER HORN.
DON'T THINK I WOULDN'T ENJOY TAKING YOU OUT, FLASK.
LOWER YOUR FIREARM -- FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION...
THIS HOTEL IS NOW UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE L.A.P.D.
WHOA! HIP FLASK, INFORMATION AGENCY.
IDENTITY CONFIRMED. TRANSGENIC HIERONYMOUS FLASK, INFORMATION AGENT.
YEAH, I'M ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS... OR WHATEVER PASSES FOR ONE ROUND HERE TODAY.
CALL FOR A MEAT WAGON, WILLYA...?
GABBATHA...
COMMISSIONER HOMSI, THE AREA IS SECURE.
WE GOT SOME SERIOUS CASUALTIES.

HOLY CRAP...
THIS IS CRAP ALL RIGHT, FARRELL.
HIP!
AND IT'S NOT GOING TO WASH OFF ANY TIME SOON.
NO GOOD CAN POSSIBLY COME OF ALL THIS...
MIKI.
WHAT HAPPENED HERE... Oh MY GOD...
SAHARA, WHERE...? WHERE IS YOUR BABY..?
GONE.
EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING IS GONE.

LOS ANGELES • 2260



CRY NOW, YOU LITTLE ILLEGITIMATE SHIT.
I'VE STOPPED THE TEARS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN LIKE YOU.
DON'T EVEN THINK YOU'LL BE ANY DIFFERENT.

"Time always erodes Advantage.
The faster you run, the more the world runs
with you and the less you make progress.

"This concept, that all progress is relative,
has come to be known in biology by the name of
The Red Queen, after a chess piece that
Alice meets in THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS,
who perpetually runs without getting far
because the landscape moves with her.

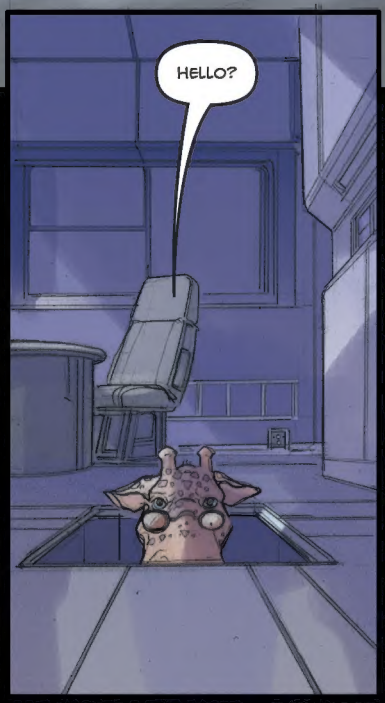
"In the world of the Red Queen, any
evolutionary progress will be relative,
as long as your foe is animate and depends
heavily on you or suffers heavily if you thrive.

"Thus the Red Queen will be hard at work
among predators and prey, parasites and
their hosts, and males and females
of the same species.

"Every success contains the seed
of its own overthrow.

"Life is a chess tournament in which,
if you win a game, you start the next game
with the handicap of a missing pawn."

MATT RIDLEY
THE RED QUEEN


HELLO?

ANYONE HERE?

Oh.

SEEMS LIKE HALF THE FORCE IS OUT THERE ON RIOT DUTY TODAY.
YEAH, I'M GUESSING THE POUND WILL BE FULL OF VEHICLES IN JUST A COUPLE OF HOURS.

HEAVENS TO BETSY.
AFTER THIS LITTLE ESCAPADE...
IT'S GOING TO BE NICE TO GET BACK TO NORMAL.

"ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE BOOKS ON THE MARKET TODAY. THE STORY IS COMPELLING ON SO MANY LEVELS AS IT BLENDS AN INTELLIGENT SOCIAL COMMENTARY WITH A PULPY, BLADE RUNNERESQUE FUTURE NOIR. I CAN'T RECOMMEND THIS BOOK ENOUGH." TATTOOS & TOYS

"PAGE AFTER PAGE OF FLAT-OUT AWESOME." SEATTLEPI

"ACTION-PACKED SCIENCE FICTION AT ITS ALL-TIME BEST. ENTER A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF DISCOVERY AND INTRIGUE!" PSYCHORELIK

"AS INTRICATE AND MOVING AS IT IS ENORMOUS IN SCOPE." JOUP

PULP! SCIENCE! FICTION!

"BOLD, MYTHIC & HEARTBREAKINGLY COOL, STARKINGS' UNIVERSE IS... A BREED APART" ANDY SERKIS

"YOU MUST CHECK IT OUT!" J.J. ABRAMS

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